

**3: BRITAIN GATHERS
STRENGTH**

**THE PENGUIN
HANSARD**

*Taken verbatim from
the
House of Commons*

Official Report of

Parliamentary Debates

5342



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THE PENGUIN HANSARD

VOL. III



40.5342
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Published in Penguin Books FEBRUARY 1941

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HIIS MAJESTY S GOVERNMENT

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by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength

all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be, for without victory, there is no survival. Let that be realised, no survival for the British Empire, no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for, no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward towards its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope. I feel sure that our cause will not be suffered to fail among men. At this time I feel entitled to claim the aid of all, and I say, "Come then, let us go forward with our united strength."

MR LEES-SMITH (Keghley) I have been asked by my colleagues on this occasion to follow the Prime Minister because it is fitting that there should be a response to the striking, stirring and noble words which he has addressed to the nation. I have also been asked to do so in order to say immediately that, of course, we support this Resolution. May I say as a result of one observation which the Prime Minister made, that we give our most sincere good wishes to the new Ministers in a task and a burden which are as heavy as have ever been imposed upon any group of statesmen in the course of our history.

I think I should state to the House in a few words why we have adopted the policy, the change of policy, that has been shown in the last few days. On Tuesday of last week we initiated a Debate for the purpose of expressing the opinion that the more vigorous conduct of the war required a reconstruction of the Government. Last Wednesday morning, after the first day's Debate, we decided as a result of the nature of that Debate, that on that night we would test the view of the House as to whether they agreed with our opinion. As a result of that Debate the reconstruction of the Government was begun, and when we were asked whether we would accept our responsibility in taking a share in that reconstruction we decided that it is not by shirking responsibility that we shall defeat Hitler.

Perhaps I may say to the House that the Labour Party has rather an elaborate constitution, and it has been laid down that matters such as these shall be decided by a Party conference consisting of hundreds of delegates elected from all over the country. As I heard the Lord Privy Seal tell that conference this morning, the Executive of the Labour Party felt that this was no time for dithering, they therefore took the responsibility of making the decision and decided to ask for the ratification of the Conference when it met. . . Perhaps the House might be interested to know that the decision of the National Executive has been ratified at Bournemouth by a majority of 2400,000 to 170,000. . .

I am reminded of a conversation which I had five years ago

with a representative from Germany. In this conversation he said to me, "If there is a war with Germany what attitude will Labour adopt?" I said to him, "You will find that there will be more complete unity than in any war in which this country has ever engaged, and Labour will support the nation 100 per cent." I remember that when I said that to him he threw up his hands and said "Don't you see that that unity which you have already secured in this country is that which the Führer is imposing on us in Germany?"

That is what is meant by the war for liberty. We have had

our lives any of us has ever experienced or passed through days more dramatic than those since the House adjourned. In that time the tremendous moment of the war has come. The first death struggle has begun. While this has been going on we have established a new War Cabinet, and, as the Prime Minister said with new Defence Ministers all at their posts, between Wednesday and Saturday night, within three days. I do not believe that there is any other form of government which could have carried through so great a change so smoothly and in so short a space of time.

There is one other reflection which I would like to make. For many years I have been compelled to read Herr Hitler deriding and despising our Parliamentary government as decadent. Now we can give him the reply. The Nazi system has been in existence for about seven years, and, when like our Parliamentary system, it has weathered the storms for about 700 years, we can begin to argue which, when the great test comes, will have the bigger staying power.

SIR PERCY HARRIS (Bethnal Green, South West). I rise, on behalf of my hon. Friends, to express our confidence in and to give our support to the new Government. The Prime Minister has two qualities which are essential to win the war—vigour and imagination. The Government and the nation are going to prove to the world that a democracy can more effectively than its enemies, wage a totalitarian war. We are convinced that a free Parliament, instead of being a source of weakness, is a source of strength, and provides that safety valve for the free expression of opinion which enables the Government more effectively to carry out its great duties. The Nazis will learn that it is dangerous to drive criticism underground. The presence of our leader in the Government gives the Liberal party in the House and in the country, a special confidence in it.

We cannot fight a war on ordinary party lines, but the House of Commons has still great duties to perform. It has still to ventilate grievances arising out of the war, and where necessary, to provide constructive criticism. National unity—and, I take

it, the new Government is a symbol of national unity—will not only encourage our own people and the Dominions beyond the seas, but will be a stimulus to our Allies in their gallant effort to preserve their liberties

MR SPENS (Ashford) As one who voted in favour of the late Prime Minister on Wednesday last and one who since the outbreak of the war has resolutely supported the late Government in its efforts, I want to be one of the first to welcome the new Government. The line I have taken since the outbreak of the war has been this: I believe it is absolutely essential for the Executive in power, of whatever complexion it be, if the war is to be won, to have the maximum support of the people of this country. I believe that what happened last Wednesday night merely brought to a conclusion an episode which some of us had foreseen from the very beginning of the war. Where you have big parties, with great strength in the country, opposing the Executive in the conduct of a war, it is impossible for the Executive to get from the country the full war effort which is necessary if the war is to be won. I do not complain of that, it is one of the things we are fighting for, that everyone should be able to express his own opinion. Opinions have been very freely expressed during the last six or seven months in this country, and, not once or twice, but on many occasions, the Executive has been very seriously embarrassed by the expression of opinion in this country on the conduct of the war. That phase in the conduct of the war has come to an end, and I thank Heaven that it has.

I assure my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and all his colleagues that, whatever we on the back benches on this side of the House can do, by supporting them, to help in winning the war, we intend to do.

MR MAXTON (Glasgow, Bridgeton) I rise to oppose the Motion because it conflicts with every political belief that I have ever held, and because it conflicts with the principles upon which I was elected to this House of Commons. I do not approve of the reconstructed Government. I view with great regret the fact that right hon. and hon. Gentlemen above the Gangway have agreed to cross the Floor of the House and to become part of His Majesty's Government. Their spokesman from the Front Bench paid tribute to Parliament as a great institution, and said that reconstruction of the House had been necessary. I have not been cor- been parliamen- France has a great belief that by changing a few men round about, something new and strange may happen. I have never believed that the strength of the House of Commons lay in the fact that there was one body of men with certain principles upon which they were united on one side, opposed by another body with a different set of principles on the other, and

that the clash of these two principles in debate and discussion—
[*Interruption*] I would like to go back over it and show how the
position in which we are to day is due entirely to the fact that
this mistake was made in the last war policy. The years from
1918 to 1939 when war broke out again the wasted years, were,
in my view largely due to the fact that the then existent parties

been created after the heavy cost that was paid for victory on the
last occasion

on
of
practically, for 20 years out of those 22, under the control of
Governments not essentially differing in position or personnel
from this one, and now you say this is going to create an entirely
new orientation. The only difference is that the Prime Minister
cuts out of his speech any reference to the possibilities of peace
short of wholesale slaughter. I and my hon Friends believe that
the overwhelming mass of the people of this world, Germany
included are against the slaughter method of life and I believe
that that great force, mainly a working-class force, throughout the
world—

MR LOGAN (Liverpool, Scotland) Surely you do not see
that in Germany?

MR MAXTON I can see people in Germany to day people
that were my comrades and the comrades of hon and right hon
Members above the Gangway, and I do not believe that they have
deserted their principles

MISS WILKINSON (Jarrow) They have gone to the con
centration camps

MR MAXTON The function of a political working class
movement is to mobilise that anti war opinion throughout the
world and make it effective in the affairs of humanity [*Interruption*]
that for the people who hold

slaughtered—

MR. MAXTON I say to the Noble Lady that now you have got us to this particular point I cannot show you how, but I can tell you what the principles are and tell you that just as the right hon. Gentleman got his chance last week so the chance of those who stand by these principles now will also come and that something better will come out of this slaughter and general folly

MR. LLOYD GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs). Perhaps I may be permitted as the senior Member of this House, to say a few words in support of this Motion. May I, as one of the oldest friends of the Prime Minister in this House—I think on the whole that we have the longest friendship in politics in spite of a great many differences of opinion—congratulate him personally upon his succession to the Premiership. But that is a small matter. I congratulate the country upon his elevation to the Premiership at this very, very critical and terrible moment. If I may venture to say so I think the Sovereign exercised a wise choice. We know the right hon. Gentleman's glittering intellectual gifts, his dauntless courage, his profound study of war, and his experience in its operation and direction. They will all be needed now. I think it is fortunate that he should have been put in a position of supreme authority. I do not know that it is altogether a matter of personal congratulation, perhaps the reverse. He is exercising his supreme responsibility at a graver moment and in times of greater jeopardy than have ever confronted a British Minister for all time. We all from the bottom of our hearts, wish him well. The friends of freedom and of human right throughout the world will wish him God speed . . .

MR S O DAVIES (Merthyr) Everybody appreciates how difficult it is for one to reorientate his mind and assimilate the implications of what has just taken place. Hon. Members on the Government Benches may perhaps appreciate the anxieties that are felt on this side, and our misgivings. We cannot dismiss entirely from our memories how disastrous Coalition Governments have been in the past. We on this side have always been conscious of the great gulf that divides us in political, economic and social matters from the other side of the House. It is a gulf that some of us believe will never be bridged until radical changes take place in the social structure of this country. We have contended, and needless to say we shall continue to contend, that hon. Members opposite represent a society that we consider to be harsh and cruel, a society that dominates the class which has placed every Member on this side of the House here to represent it and to challenge that form of society. We know its incredible meanness, and we know the appalling dangers and insecurities of the form of society which exists at this moment, while this war is going on, for the poorer classes of this country.

Frankly, I do not envy the step that my right hon. Friends have taken, and I have a strong suspicion that that step will not add to their happiness. We shall await to see whether the injustices of this form of society will continue. No change of personnel will affect them unless a radical change in viewpoint is adopted by the Coalition Government. We regard with considerable anxiety the fact that if the war is to be continued on the basis of a form of society in this country that is decrepit, and that is divided from top to bottom, once you step outside this House, with its class domination, with its inhibitions and its contradictions, if these are to be perpetuated during this war, we at any rate must dread the appalling consequences. If this is a war for democracy, it can be waged and won only when democracy is experienced by our own people, for a mere change of personnel will not end the devastating economic crisis that we know so much about.

I shall be told that the only thing that matters is that the war should be won. We are of the opinion that this war will not be won by stultifying and hamstringing opinion in this House of Commons, and we shall most strenuously fight against any attempt to stifle fair and constructive criticism from these benches. We shall not willingly accept anything approaching voluntary totalitarianism if that is the price of the Coalition that has been established.

The House divided Ayes, 381, Noes 0.

CHAPTER II

THE MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK

22 May, 1940

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (MR ATTLEE) . The situation is grave. Every Hon. Member is aware of that, and also of the issues which are at stake. A great battle is now proceeding. Our men at sea, on land and in the air, are fighting with splendid courage, devotion and skill, in company with the freedom-loving people who are our Allies. The result of that battle we cannot know, but it must be clear to all that the next few weeks will be critical. Our ruthless enemy, who is restrained by no considerations of international law, of justice or humanity, is throwing everything into the scale to force a decision. We are resolved that he shall not succeed.

23 May, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) The German armoured forces which made their way through the breach in the French Army have penetrated into the rear of the Allied Armies in Belgium and are now attempting to derange their communications. Abbeville is in enemy hands and heavy fighting is proceeding around and in Boulogne. It is too early yet to say what the result of this coastal fighting may be, but it evidently carries with it implications of a serious character. Meanwhile, General Weygand, who is in supreme command, is conducting operations involving all the Allied Armies with a view to restoring and reconstituting their combined front.

28 May, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) The House will be aware that the King of the Belgians yesterday sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command asking for a suspension of arms on the Belgian front. The British and French Governments instructed their generals immediately to dissociate themselves from this procedure and to persevere in the operations in which they are now engaged. However, the German Command has agreed to the Belgian proposals and the Belgian Army ceased to resist the enemy's will at four o'clock this morning. I have no intention of suggesting to the House that we should attempt at this moment to pass judgment upon the action of the King of

be the only legal Government of Belgium, has formally announced its resolve to continue the war at the side of the Allies who have come to the aid of Belgium at her urgent appeal. Whatever our feelings may be upon the facts so far as they are known to us,

we must remember that the sense of brotherhood between the many people who have fallen into the power of the aggressor and those who still confront him will play its part in better days than those through which we are passing.

The situation of the British and French Armies now engaged in a most severe battle and beset on three sides and from the air, is evidently extremely grave. The surrender of the Belgian Army in this manner adds appreciably to their grievous peril. But the troops are in good heart, and are fighting with the utmost discipline and tenacity, and I shall, of course, abstain from giving any particulars of what, with the powerful assistance of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, they are doing or hope to do. I expect to make a statement to the House on the general position when the result of the intense struggle now going on can be known and measured. This will not, perhaps, be until the beginning of next week.

Meanwhile, the House should prepare itself for hard and heavy tidings. I have only to add that nothing which may happen in this battle can in any way relieve us of our duty to defend the world cause to which we have vowed ourselves, nor should it destroy our confidence in our power to make our way, as on former occasions in our history, through disaster and through grief to the ultimate defeat of our enemies.

4 June, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL) From the moment that the French defences at Sedan and on the Meuse were broken at the end of the second week of May, only a rapid

Moreover, a retirement of this kind would have involved almost certainly the destruction of the fine Belgian Army of over twenty divisions and the abandonment of the whole of Belgium. Therefore, when the force and scope of the German penetration were realised, and when a new French Generalissimo, General Weygand, assumed command in place of General Gamelin, an effort was made by the French and British Armies in Belgium to keep on holding the right hand of the Belgians and to give their own right hand to a newly-created French Army which was to have advanced across the Somme in great strength to grasp it.

However, the German eruption swept like a sharp scythe around the right and rear of the Armies of the north. Eight or

own communications for food and ammunition,

might well have proved final was yet to fall upon us. The King of the Belgians had called upon us to come to his aid. Had not this Ruler and his Government severed themselves from the Allies, who rescued their country from extinction in the late war, and had they not sought refuge in what has proved to be a fatal neutrality, the French and British Armies might well at the outset have saved not only Belgium but perhaps even Poland. Yet at the last moment, when Belgium was already invaded, King Leopold called upon us to come to his aid, and even at the last moment we came. He and his brave, efficient Army, nearly half a million

upon his own personal act, he sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command, surrendered his Army, and exposed our whole flank and means of retreat.

I asked the House a week ago to suspend its judgment because the facts were not clear, but I do not feel that any reason now exists why we should not form our own opinions upon this pitiful episode. The surrender of the Belgian Army compelled the

demned the finest Army his country had ever formed. So in doing this and in exposing this flank, as anyone who followed the operations on the map will see, contact was lost between the British and two out of the three corps forming the First French Army, who were still further from the coast than we were, and it seemed impossible that any large number of Allied troops could reach the coast.

The enemy attacked on all sides with great strength and fierceness and their main power, the power of their far more numerous air force, was thrown into the battle or else concentrated upon Dunkirk and the beaches. Pressing in upon the narrow exit, both from the east and from the west, the enemy began to fire with cannon upon the beaches by which alone the shipping could approach or depart. They sowed magnetic mines in the channels and seas, they sent repeated waves of hostile aircraft, sometimes more than 100 strong in one formation, to cast their bombs upon the single pier that remained, and upon the sand dunes upon which the troops had their eyes for shelter. Their U-boats, one of which was sunk, and their motor launches took their toll of the vast traffic which now began. For four or five days an intense struggle reigned. All their armoured divisions—or what was left of them—together with great masses of German infantry and artillery, hurled themselves in vain upon the ever-narrowing, ever-contracting appendix within which the British and French Armies fought.

Meanwhile, the Royal Navy, with the willing help of countless merchant seamen, strained every nerve to embark the British and

are enormous. We have perhaps lost one-third of the men we lost in the opening days of the battle of 21 March, 1918, but we have lost nearly as many guns—nearly 1,000 guns—and all our transport, all the armoured vehicles that were with the Army in the North. This loss will impose a further delay on the expansion of our military strength. That expansion had not been proceeding as fast as we had hoped. The best of all we had to give had gone to the British Expeditionary Force, and although they had not the numbers of tanks and some articles of equipment which were desirable, they were a very well and finely equipped Army. They had the first fruits of all that our industry had to give, and that is gone. And now here is this further delay. How long it will be, how long it will last, depends upon the exertions which we make in this island. An effort the like of which has never been seen in our records is now being made. Work is proceeding everywhere, night and day, Sundays and week days. Capital and labour have cast aside their interests, rights, and customs and put them into the common stock. Already the flow of munitions has leapt forward. There is no reason why we should not in a few months overtake the sudden and serious loss that has come upon us, without retarding the development of our general programme.

Nevertheless, our thankfulness at the escape of our Army and so many men, whose loved ones have passed through an agonising week, must not blind us to the fact that what has happened in France and Belgium is a colossal military disaster. The French Army has been weakened, the Belgian Army has been lost, a large part of those fortified lines upon which so much faith has been reposed is gone, many valuable mining districts and factories have passed into the hands of the enemy. Our ports are in his hands. From that, and immediately at

has a plan for invading the British Isles. This has often been thought of before. When Napoleon lay at Boulogne for a year with his flat-bottomed boats and his Grand Army, he was told by someone, "There are bitter weeds in England." There are certainly a great many more of them since the British Expeditionary Force returned.

The whole question of home defence against invasion is, of course, powerfully affected by the fact that we have for the time being in this island incomparably more powerful military forces than we have ever had at any moment in this war or the last. But this will not be sufficient to enable us to live warily and build up our gallant

but in the interval we must put our defences in this island into such a high state of organisation that the fewest possible numbers will be required to give effective security and that the largest

possible potential of offensive effort may be realised. On this we are now engaged. It will be very convenient, if it be the desire of the House, to enter into a discussion of the subject. Not that the Government have any very great detail military discussions free, without the restraint imposed by the fact that they will be read the next day by the enemy, and the Government would benefit by views freely expressed in all parts of the House by Members with their knowledge of so many different parts of the country. I understand that some request is to be made upon this subject, which will be readily acceded to by His Majesty's Government.

We have found it necessary to take measures of increasing stringency, not only against enemy aliens and suspicious characters of other nationalities, but also against British subjects who may become a danger or a nuisance should the war be transported to the United Kingdom. I know there are a great many people affected by the orders which we have made who are the passionate enemies of Nazi Germany. I am very sorry for them, but we cannot, at the present time and under the present stress, draw all

their own sakes as well as for ours. There is, however, another class, for which I feel not the slightest sympathy. Parliament has given us the powers to put down Fifth Column activities with a strong hand, and we shall use those powers, subject to the supervision and correction of the House, without the slightest

all these long centuries of which we boast when an absolute guarantee against invasion, still less against serious raids, could have been given to our people. In the days of Napoleon, of which I was speaking just now, the same wind which would have carried his transports across the Channel might have driven away the blockading fleet. There was always the chance, and it is that chance which has excited and befooled the imaginations of many Continental tyrants. Many are the tales that are told. We are assured that novel methods will be adopted, and when we see the originality of malice, the ingenuity of aggression, which our enemy displays, we may certainly prepare ourselves for every kind of novel stratagem and every kind of brutal and treacherous manoeuvre. I think that no idea is so outlandish that it should not be considered and viewed with a searching, but at the same time, I hope, with a steady eye. We must never forget the solid assurances of sea power and those which belong to air power if it can be locally exercised.

I have, myself, full confidence that if all do their duty, if nothing

is neglected, and if the best arrangements are made, as they are being made we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home to ride out the storm of war, and to outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary for years, if necessary alone. At any rate, that is what we are going to try to do. That is the resolve of His Majesty's Government—every man of them. That is the will of Parliament and the nation. The British Empire and the French Republic, linked together in their cause and in their need, will defend to the death their native soil, aiding each other like good comrades to the utmost of their strength. Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail, we shall go on to the end, we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills, we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or large part of it, were to fall, we shall continue to fight on, we shall fight in the air, we shall fight on the sea, we shall fight in the streets of the home islands, we shall fight with the power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old

CHAPTER III

THE DARKEST HOUR

11 June, 1940

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (MR. ATTLEE) I rise to make a statement on recent happenings, in the absence of my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister. Because of the pressure of war on other fronts, Allied Forces have been withdrawn from Norway, and the Norwegian forces in North Norway have laid down their arms. In order to save Norwegian territory from further destruction by the Germans and to watch over Norwegian interests during the war, the Norwegian King and Government have left Norway and come to this country. It was with deep regret that His Majesty's Government were forced to take the decision to abandon their campaign in North Norway at the moment it had turned in our favour and Narvik had fallen into our hands. The time, however, had come when it

was clear that all the available resources at the Allies' disposal must be employed on the main front where the issue of the war and the fate of Norway and all other free and democratic countries will be decided.

It was also a hard decision for the Norwegian King and Government to leave their own country. They had held out for two months against the full weight of the German forces and were undefeated at the end. During this time the example of the King's courage, devotion and dignity in distress had been the mainstay of the Norwegian resistance. Norway had decided to continue the struggle against Germany on other fronts. The Norwegian Government have made this clear in the Royal Proclamation issued on 9th June. Whereas before the British, French and Polish Governments have been helping the Norwegians in a war of independence, the Norwegian Government will now use all their resources to help the Allies in their war against Germany. This decision, for which the Allied Governments are deeply grateful, is evidence of the conviction of the Norwegian people that the only hope for the future lies in an Allied victory and that the Allied cause, with which they are now more than ever identified, will surely prevail.

I regret to inform the House, as already announced in the Press, that the Aircraft Carrier *Glorious*, the destroyers *Ardent* and *Acasta*, the oiler *Oil Pioneer*, and the *Orama*, an empty transport, are presumed to have been lost in an encounter with enemy forces following upon the withdrawal of our forces from Narvik. I regret that there are no further particulars available, as soon as they are available, they will be given to the House.

As the House knows Italy declared war on Great Britain and France early this morning. Hardly ever before in history can the decision to embroil a great nation in war have been taken so wantonly and with so little excuse. There is no quarrel between the Italians and the British and French peoples. Since we became a nation we have never fought the Italians. On the other hand, Italy has been a constant menace to our peace and stability.

...all along been prepared to consider any real grievances of Italy and to right them. We have sought repeatedly to come to an agreement with Italy. We have sought up to the last to prevent the war spreading to the Mediterranean peoples. The British and French Governments and the British and French peoples have been patient under constant abuse and provocation. Why, then, has Italy declared war? I say, for completely sordid and material motives, because Signor Mussolini thinks that he sees a chance of securing some spoils at the expense of the Western democracies now that they are at grips with the brute forces of Germany. Signor Mussolini uses the argument of the jackal which scents the possibility of getting some scraps from another

beast's kill. He puts forward the argument of the petty sneak-thief to rob and rifle the pockets of the murderer's victim.

This is the ignoble role that Signor Mussolini has chosen for the great Italian people, which has made such a splendid contribution to European civilisation in the past. False to the finest traditions of that Roman Empire which laid the foundations of law and order in Europe, false to the Christian faith, false to the heritage and the culture of the Renaissance, betraying the men of the Risorgimento who struggled for freedom—Mazzini, Garibaldi, Victor Emanuel and Cavour—men who made Italy a free nation, Italians are now to aid the German barbarians in the attack upon civilisation. I cannot but believe that many Italians will feel ashamed of the rôle that has been thrust upon them. France, which freed the Italians from German domination, is now stabbed in the back by the descendants of the men she freed. Britain is to be attacked in the hope that by her destruction

the Roman Empire

will be made a mistake. The victims

The French people, never greater than when in adversity, are fighting magnificently by sea, by air and on their own soil of France. Britain, with all its strength, in the air, by sea, and by land, is standing firmly by her side. The Italians, like the Germans, will find that they have to meet a resolute resistance. They will soon find—they are already finding—what is the might of sea-power. Already fourteen ships have been seized, ten others are in our ports, and three, on the best German model, have been scuttled. The imaginary restraints which our occupation of the Eastern and Western ends of the Mediterranean are supposed to impose upon Italy in time of peace become realities in time of war. Italy, like Germany, will feel the blockade. I say we have no ill will to the Italian people. We are sorry that they should be brought to the slaughter on account of the over-weening ambition and the lust for blood of the Duce, but we are prepared to meet the challenge. We shall give them blow for blow.

The two dictators have united to destroy democracy. Democracy will answer the challenge. From across the Atlantic has come the answer of a great democracy. It was as if day followed the night when, only a few hours after the dictator of Italy had made his dastardly announcement to the serried ranks of Blackshirts, that the President of the United States delivered to the youth of his country a message worthy of that great and free Republic, and in extending the whole of America's sympathy to those nations that are giving their lifeblood in the combat against force and hate, Mr. Roosevelt has vitally inspired the free people of Europe. His assurance that the material resources of his great industrial nation will be placed at the disposal of the Allies makes it inevitable that, however hard the road, the cause of civilisation will in the end prevail.

Let me say to the House and to the country that this new attack

does not cause us dismay. It makes no difference to our stern resolution to defeat all our enemies or to our confidence in our ability to withstand all attacks and achieve victory. Rather it should increase our determination to strain every nerve to meet all the dangers and difficulties of this critical time in the sure knowledge that we fight not for ourselves alone but for the freedom of the human spirit.

MR. LEES SMITH (Keighley) The most important part of the statement of the Lord Privy Seal was that which dealt with the declaration of war by the Fascist dictator, and at this moment I think only one thing needs to be said. I will put it in one sentence. Both the dictators have now thrown off their masks and have become avowed accomplices and it is therefore now clear to all men everywhere that on this country and on France depend the hopes of free men in every nation of the world.

CAPTAIN VYVYAN ADAMS (Leeds West) Is it now the resolve of His Majesty's Government to redress the wrongs done in Ethiopia and Spain?

MR. GALLACHER (Fife West) Is the Lord Privy Seal aware of the fulsome eulogy of Italian Fascism in this statement that I have in my hands by Lord Lloyd and Viscount Halifax and will he have this statement withdrawn from publication and have action taken against the authors of it?

COMMANDER LOCKER LAMPSON (Birmingham Handsworth) Will the Government draw a distinction between Italians and Italians and remember that the Pope has stood for peace and that His Holiness is a figure we must reverence and look up to? Will it also be remembered that we have in the King of Italy a man who stood for peace and that we ought to distinguish between King Victor Emmanuel the real Monarch of the Italian people and Signor Mussolini the castor-oil king?

MR. THURTLÉ (Shoreditch) I wish to say a word or two on the speech which has just been made by the Lord Privy Seal. It seems to me that we are having too much in the way of bombastic talk. I listened last night to the Minister of Information and I was really horrified at his bombastic tone. I believe the people of this country want less talk and more action. I would suggest that there is a certain strength in silence and that until we are ready to act strongly we had better talk less loudly.

MR. ATTLEE I think that the House will agree with me that most of these questions do not really require an answer to-day. The House will not expect me to make a statement as to what our plans are.

18 June 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL) I spoke the other day of the colossal military disaster which occurred when the French High Command failed to withdraw the Northern Armies from Belgium at the moment when they knew that the French front was decisively broken at Sedan and on the Meuse. This delay entailed the loss of fifteen or sixteen French divisions and threw out of action for the critical period the whole of the British Expeditionary Force. Our Army and 120,000 French troops were indeed rescued by the British Navy from Dunkirk, but only with the loss of their cannon, vehicles and modern equipment. This loss inevitably took some weeks to repair, and in the first two of those weeks the battle in France has been lost. When we consider the heroic resistance made by the French Army against heavy odds in this battle, the enormous losses inflicted upon the enemy and the evident exhaustion of the enemy, it may well be thought that these twenty-five divisions of the best-trained However, three British the line with ly, but they have fought well. We sent every man we could to France as fast as we could re-equip and transport their formations.

I am not reciting these facts for the purpose of recrimination. That, I judge, to be utterly futile and even harmful. We cannot afford it. I recite them in order to explain why it was we did not have, as we could have had, between twelve and fourteen British divisions fighting in the line in this great battle instead of only three. Now I put all this aside. I put it on the shelf, from which the historians, when they have time, will select their documents to tell their stories. We have to think of the future and not of the past. This also applies in a small way to our own affairs at home. There are many who would hold an inquest in the House of Commons on the conduct of the Governments—and of Parliaments, for they are in it, too—during the years which led up to this catastrophe. They seek to indict those who were responsible for the guidance of our affairs. This also would be a foolish and pernicious process. There are too many in it. Let each man search his conscience and search his speeches. I frequently search mine.

Of this I am quite sure, that if we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future.

Therefore I must repeat the foregoing. the country and fight the war. It is absolutely necessary at a time like this that every Minister who tries each day to do . . .

duty shall be respected, and their subordinates must know that their chiefs are not threatened men men who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, but that their directions must be punctually and faithfully obeyed. Without this concentrated power we cannot face what lies before us. I should not think it would be very advantageous for the House to prolong this Debate this afternoon under conditions of public stress. Many facts are not clear that will be clear in a short time. We are to have a Secret Session on Thursday, and I should think that would be a better opportunity for the many earnest expressions of opinion which Members will desire to make and for the House to discuss vital matters, as I have said before, without having everything read the next morning by our dangerous foes.

The military events which have happened during the past fortnight have not come to me with any sense of surprise. Indeed, I indicated a fortnight ago as clearly as I could to the House that the worst possibilities were open, and I made it perfectly clear then that whatever happened in France would make no difference to the resolve of Britain and the British Empire to fight on "if necessary for years, if necessary alone." During the last few days we have successfully brought off the great majority of the troops we had on the lines of communication in France—a very large number, scores of thousands—and seven eighths of the troops we have sent to France since the beginning of the war, that is to say, about 350,000 out of 400,000 men, are safely back in this country. Others are still fighting with the French, and fighting with considerable success in their local encounters with the enemy. We have also brought back a great mass of stores, rifles and munitions of all kinds which had been accumulated in France during the last nine months.

We have, therefore, in this island to-day a very large and powerful military force. This force includes all our best trained and finest troops and includes scores of thousands of those who have already measured their quality against the Germans and found themselves at no disadvantage. We have under arms at the present time in this island over a million and a quarter men. Behind these we have the Local Defence Volunteers, numbering half a million, only a portion of whom, however, are yet armed with rifles or other firearms. We have incorporated into our Defence Forces every man for whom we have a weapon. We expect a very large addition to our weapons in the near future, and in preparation for this we intend to call up, drill and train further large numbers at once. Those who are not called up or employed upon the vast business of munitions production in all its branches—and it runs through every kind of grade—serve their country best by remaining at their work.

We also have 1.
actually landed in
much disappointed
and equipment. These very high-class forces from the Dominions

will now take part in the defence of the Mother Country. Lest the account which I have given of these very large forces should raise the question why they did not take part in the great battle in France I must make it clear that apart from the divisions training and organising at home only twelve divisions were equipped to fight upon a scale which justified their being sent abroad. This was fully up to the number which the French had been led to expect would be available in France at the ninth month of the war. The rest of our forces at home have a fighting value for home defence which will of course, steadily increase every week that passes. Thus the invasion of Great Britain would at this time require the transportation across the sea of hostile armies upon a very large scale and after they had been so transported, they would have to be continually maintained with all the masses of munitions and supplies which are required for continuous battle as continuous battle it would be.

Here is where we come to the Navy. After all, we have a Navy. Some people seem to forget that. We must remind them. For the last thirty years I have been concerned in discussions about the possibilities of oversea invasion and I took the responsibility on behalf of the Admiralty, at the beginning of the last war, of allowing all Regular troops to be sent out of the country, although our Territorials had only just been called up and were quite untrained. Therefore, this island was for several months practically denuded of fighting troops. The Admiralty had confidence at that time in their ability to prevent a mass invasion, even though at that time the Germans had a magnificent battle fleet in the proportion of ten to sixteen even though they were capable of fighting a general engagement every day and any day, whereas now they have only a couple of heavy ships worth speaking of. We are also told that the Italian Navy is to come to gain sea superiority in these waters. If they seriously intend it, I shall only say that we shall be delighted to offer Signor Mussolini a free and safeguarded passage through the Straits of Gibraltar in order that he may play the part which he aspires to do. There is general curiosity in the British Fleet to find out whether the

to-day than we were at many periods in the last war and during
of 5 000 or 10 000 men flung suddenly across and thrown ashore at several points on the coast some dark night or foggy morning. The efficacy of sea power, especially under modern conditions, depends upon the invading force being of large size. It has to be of large size, in view of our military strength to be of any use. If it is of large size, then the Navy have something they can find

and meet and, as it were, bite on. Now we must remember that even five divisions, however lightly equipped, would require 200 to 250 ships, and with modern air reconnaissance and photography, it would not be easy to collect such an armada, marshal it and conduct it across the sea without any powerful naval forces to escort it, and with the very great possibility that it would be intercepted long before it reached the coast, and the men all drowned in the sea or, at the worst, blown to pieces with their equipment while they were trying to land. We also have a great system of minefields recently strongly reinforced, through which we alone know the Channel. If the enemy tries to sweep passages through these minefields, it will be the task of the Navy to destroy the minesweepers and any other forces employed to protect them. There should be no difficulty in this, owing to our great superiority at sea.

Those are the regular, well tested, well proved arguments on which we have relied during many years in peace and war. But the question is whether there are any new methods by which those solid assurances can be circumvented. Odd as it may seem, some attention has been given to this by the Admiralty, whose prime duty and responsibility it is to destroy any large seaborne expedition before it reaches or at the moment when it reaches these shores. It would not be useful to go into details. It might even suggest ideas to other people which they have not thought of, and they would not be likely to give us any of their ideas in exchange. All I will say is that untiring vigilance and mind-searching must be devoted to the subject because the enemy is crafty and cunning and full of novel treacheries and stratagems. The House may be assured that the utmost ingenuity is being displayed and imagination is being evoked from large numbers of competent officers well trained in tactics and thoroughly up to date, to measure and counterwork novel possibilities, of which many are suggested, some very absurd and some by no means utterly irrational.

Some people will ask why, then, was it that the British Navy was not able to prevent the movement of a large army from Germany into Norway across the Skaggeak? But the conditions in the Channel and in the North Sea are in no way like those which prevail in the Skaggeak. In the Skaggeak, because of the distance, we could give no air support to our surface ships, and consequently, lying as we did close to the enemy's main air power, in those waters, we were compelled to use only our submarines. We could not enforce the decisive blockade or interruption which is possible from surface vessels. Our submarines took a heavy toll but could not, by themselves, prevent the invasion of Norway. In the Channel and in the North Sea on the other hand, our superior naval surface forces, aided by our submarines, will operate with close and effective air assistance.

This brings me, naturally, to the great question of invasion from the air and of the impending struggle between the British

and German air forces. It seems quite clear that no invasion on a scale beyond the capacity of our land forces to crush speedily is likely to take place from the air until our Air Force has been definitely overpowered. In the meantime, there may be raids by parachute troops and attempted descents of airborne soldiers. We should be able to give those gentry a warm reception both in the air and if they reach the ground. But the question is, what is our weapon? Now,

we have not got an Air Force at least equal to that of the most powerful enemy within striking distance of these shores. But we have a very powerful Air Force which has proved itself far superior in quality, both in men and in many types of machine, to what we have met so far in the numerous fierce air battles which have been fought. In France, where we were at a considerable disadvantage and lost many machines on the ground, we were accustomed to inflict losses of as much as two to two and a half to one. In the fighting over Dunkirk, which was a sort of no man's land, we undoubtedly beat the German air force, and this gave us the mastery locally in the air, and we inflicted losses of three or four to one. Anybody who looks at the photographs which were published a week or so ago of the re-embarkation, showing the masses of troops assembled on the beach and forming an ideal target for hours at a time, must realise that this re-embarkation would not have been possible unless the enemy had resigned all hope of recovering air superiority at that point.

In the defence of this island the advantages to the defenders will be very great. We hope to improve on the rate of three or four to one which was realised at Dunkirk, and in addition all our injured machines and their crews which get down safely—and, surprisingly, a very great many injured machines and men do get down safely in modern air fighting—all of these will fall, in an attack upon these islands, on friendly soil and live to fight another day, whereas all injured enemy machines and their complements will be total losses as far as the war is concerned. During the great battle in France, we gave very powerful and continuous aid to the French Army both by fighters and bombers, but in spite of every kind of pressure we never would allow the entire Metropolitan strength of the Air Force, in fighters, to be consumed. That decision was painful, but it was also right, because the fortunes of the battle in France could not have been decisively affected, even if we had thrown in our entire fighter force. The battle was lost by the unfortunate strategical opening, by the extraordinary unforeseen power of the armoured columns, and by the

Our

present time in a very serious plight. But, as it is, I am happy to inform the House that our fighter air strength is stronger at the present time, relatively to the Germans, who have

terrible losses, than it has ever been, and consequently we believe ourselves to possess the capacity to continue the war in the air under better conditions than we have ever experienced before. I look forward confidently to the exploits of our fighter pilots, who will have the glory of saving their native land, their island home, and all they love, from the most deadly of all attacks.

There remains the danger of bombing attacks, which will certainly be made very soon upon us by the bomber forces of the enemy. It is true that the German bomber force is superior in numbers to ours, but we have a very large bomber force also.

Barcelona, and will be able to stand up to it, and carry on in spite of it, at least as well as any other people in the world. Much will depend upon this, and every man and every woman will have the chance to show the finest qualities of their race and render the highest service to their cause. For all of us at this time, whatever our sphere, our station, our occupation, our duties, it will be a help to remember the famous lines

"He nothing common did or mean,
Upon that memorable scene.

I have thought it right upon this occasion to give the House and the country some indication of the solid, practical grounds upon which we base our inflexible resolve to continue the war,

Mr. Menzies, Mr. Fraser and General Smuts, messages couched in the most moving terms in which they endorse our decision and declare themselves ready to share our fortunes and to persevere to the end.

We may now ask ourselves, In what ways is our position worsened since the beginning of the war? It is worsened by the fact that the Germans have gained a large part of the supplies

the contrary definitely increases, the power of our long distance blockade. Should military resistance come to an end in France, which is not yet certain, though it will in any case be greatly diminished, the Germans can concentrate their forces, both military and industrial, upon us. But for the reasons I have given to the House these will not be found so easy to apply. If invasion becomes more imminent, we, being relieved from the task of maintaining a large army in France, have far larger and

more efficient forces here to meet them. If Hitler can bring under his despotic control the industries of the countries he has conquered this will add greatly to his already vast armament output. On the other hand, this will not happen immediately,

and across the oceans, coming from regions which are beyond the reach of enemy bombers.

When we declared war on the 3 September it was always possible for Germany to turn all her air force upon this country, together with any other devices of invasion she might conceive, and that France could do little or nothing to prevent her doing so. We have, therefore, lived under this danger, in principle and in a slightly

vigilance and exertion, but none whatever for panic or despair. During the first

as my right h

Boroughs (Mr

and disappointment, and yet at the end their morale was higher than that of the Germans, who had moved from one aggressive triumph to another. During that war we repeatedly asked ourselves the question, "How are we going to win?" and no one was able ever to answer it with much precision, until at the end, quite suddenly, quite unexpectedly, our terrible foe collapsed before us, and we were so glutted with victory that in our folly we cast it away.

We do not yet know what will happen in France or whether the French resistance will be prologued, both in France and in the French Empire overseas. The French Government will be throwing away great opportunities and casting away their future if they do not continue the war in accordance with their Treaty obligations, from which we have not felt able to release them.

The House will have read the historic declaration in which, at the desire of many Frenchmen, and of our own hearts, we have proclaimed our willingness to conclude at the darkest hour in

will never lose our sense of comradeship with the French people.

If we are now called upon to endure what they have suffered we shall emulate their courage, and if final victory rewards our toils they shall share the gains, aye, and freedom shall be restored to all. We abate nothing of our just demands—Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, all who have joined their causes to our own shall be restored.

... .. the of France " is over
 to begin Upon this
 civilisation Upon it
 depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands, but if we fail then the whole world, including the United States, and all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more prolonged, by the lights of a perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years men will still say, "This was their finest hour."

MR LEES SMITH (Keighley) My hon Friends on these benches have asked me on their behalf to say one or two sentences. They wish to say to the Prime Minister that in their experience among the broad masses of the people of this country never in their lives has the country been more united than it is to-day in its support of the Prime Minister's assertion that we shall carry on right to the end. One sentence can summarise what we feel. Whatever the country is asked for in the months and, if necessary, in the years to come, the Prime Minister may be confident that the people will rise to their responsibilities.

SIR PERCY HARRIS (Bethnal Green, South-West) All I want to do is to congratulate the right hon Gentleman on his brave speech and the leadership, the great leadership, he has given to his country, and I can undertake to say that the nation is behind him.

25 June, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) The House will feel profound sorrow at the fate of the great French nation and people, to whom we have been joined so long in war and peace, and whom we have regarded as trustees with ourselves for the progress of a liberal culture and tolerant civilisation in Europe.

... .. she has been cast by the might and fury of the enemy—[An Hon

MEMBER: "And by the politicians"]—and from other causes. We hope, however, that the French Empire stretching all over the continent will continue the struggle and become the seat of the final victory, and will organise armies of liberation.

These are matters which Frenchmen alone can decide. We find it difficult to believe that the interests of France and the spirit of France will find no other expression than in the melancholy decisions which have been taken by the Government of Bordeaux. We shall certainly aid to the best of our ability and resources, any movement or any action by Frenchmen outside the power of the enemy, to work for the defeat of Nazi German barbarism and for the freedom and restoration of France. What our relations will be with the Bordeaux Government I cannot tell. They have delivered themselves over to the enemy and lie wholly in his power. He may do much by blandishments or by severities, by propaganda, and by the choosing of pro-German Ministers to make our relations difficult. We do not know whether we shall be allowed to have any British representative in the restricted region called "unoccupied France," because that is entirely surrounded by and under the control of the enemy, but, relying upon the true genius of the French people, and their judgment upon what has happened, when they are allowed to know the facts, we shall endeavour to keep such contacts as are possible through the bars of their prison. Meanwhile we must look to our own salvation and effectual defence, upon which not only British but French, European, and world-wide fortunes depend. The safety of Great Britain and the British Empire is powerfully, though not decisively, affected by what has happened to the French Fleet.

When it became clear that the defeat and subjugation of France was imminent and that her fine Army, on which so many hopes were set, was reeling under the German flail, M. Reynaud, the courageous Prime Minister, asked me to come to Tours, which I did on 13 June, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for Aircraft Production, Lord Beaverbrook. I see that some accounts have been given of these conversations by the Bordeaux Government which do not at all correspond with the facts. We have, of course, a record kept by one of the Cabinet secretaries who came with us, and I do not propose to go into this now at any length. M. Reynaud, after dwelling on the conditions at the front and the state of the French Army, with which I was well acquainted, asked me whether Great Britain would release France from her obligations not to negotiate for an Armistice or peace without the consent of her British Ally. Although I knew how great French sufferings were, and that we had not so far

that a further appeal should be made by M. Reynaud to the United States and that if the reply was not sufficient to enable M. Reynaud to go on fighting—and he, after all, was the fighting spirit—then we should meet again and take a decision in the light of the new factors. On the 16th I received a message from M. Reynaud, who had then moved to Bordeaux, to say that the American response was not satisfactory, and requesting the formal release of France from her obligations under the Anglo-French Agreement. The Cabinet was immediately convened, and we sent a message, of which I do not give the exact text, but I give the general substance. *Separate negotiations, whether for Armistice or peace, depend upon an agreement made with the French Republic and not with any particular French administration or statesman. They, therefore, involve the honour of France.* However, in view of all they had suffered and of the forces evidently working upon them, and provided that the French Fleet is despatched to British ports and remains there while the negotiations are conducted, *His Majesty's Government will give their consent to the French Government asking what terms of armistice would be open to them.* It was also made clear that His Majesty's Government were resolved to continue the war, altogether apart from French aid, disassociated themselves from such inquiries about an Armistice.

The same evening, the 16th, when I was preparing at M. Reynaud's invitation, to go to see him, and I was in fact in the train, I received news that he had been overthrown and that a new Government under Marshal Petain had been formed, which Government had been formed for the prime purpose of seeking an Armistice with Germany. In these circumstances, we naturally did everything in our power to secure proper arrangements for the disposition of the French Fleet. We reminded the new Government that the condition indispensable to their release had not been complied with, the condition being that it should be sent to a British port. There was plenty of time to do it, and it would have made no difference to the negotiations: the terms could hardly have been more severe than they were. In order to reinforce the earnestness with which we held our views, we sent the First Sea Lord and the First Lord as well as Lord Lloyd to establish what contacts were possible with the new Ministers. Everything was, of course, fusing into collapse at that time, but many solemn assurances were given that the Fleet would never be allowed to fall into German hands. It was, therefore, "with grief and amazement," to quote the words of the Government statement which we issued on Sunday, that I read Article 8 of the Armistice terms.

That Article states that the French Government have to

clear that the French war vessels under this Armistice pass into German and Italian control while fully armed. We note, of course, in the same Article the solemn declaration of the German Government that they have no intention of using them for their own purposes during the war. What is the value of that? Ask

provision it would be possible for the German Government to reserve, ostensibly for coast surveillance, any existing units of the French Fleet. Finally, the Armistice can at any time be voided on any pretext of non observance, and the terms of Armistice explicitly provide for further German claims when any peace between Germany and France comes to be signed. Such, in very brief epitome, are the salient points in this lamentable and also memorable episode of which no doubt a much fuller account will

attempt to pronounce or speculate upon it, but I may well have more to say should the House permit me to make a further statement next week. In the meantime, I hope that the House will continue to extend their full confidence to His Majesty's Government and will believe that neither patience nor resolution will be lacking in the measures they may think right to take for the safety of the Empire.

MR HORE BELISHA. Has not the statement to which the House has just listened shown the absolute necessity in these times of carrying Parliament with us at every stage? Is it not inconceivable that this great surrender could have been made had the French Government been in session and public opinion, as expressed through the Press, not been subjected to a rigorous censorship? Will my right hon. Friend assure us, as I am sure he has this matter in mind, that in this country Parliament and a free Press will be maintained, so that the Government may not be cut off from the stimulus and inspiration of these patriotic elements in the country?

MR CHURCHILL. It was certainly not the fault of the

British Parliament. Arrangements are being made—which I cannot conceive will be necessary, but are very carefully worked out—to enable Parliament to continue to be the guide, director

and support of His Majesty's Government, and for the Press also to fulfil its function in all the grave vicissitudes which may lie before us

Then follow two extracts from the Official Report of Inter dates than the events to which they refer. They are inserted here in order to preserve the continuity of the narrative

16 October, 1940

Mr. ATTLEE. I am circulating in the OFFICIAL REPORT the full text of the proposed declaration of Union which was published in the Press on 18 June

Following is the Declaration of Union

"At this most fateful moment in the history of the modern world the Governments of the United Kingdom and the French Republic make this declaration of indissoluble union and unyielding resolution in their common defence of justice and freedom, against subjection to a system which reduces mankind to a life of robots and slaves

"The two Governments declare that France and Great Britain shall no longer be two nations but one Franco-British Union. The constitution of the Union will provide for joint organs of defence, foreign financial, and economic policies. Every citizen of France will enjoy immediately citizenship of Great Britain, every British subject will become a citizen of France

"Both countries will share responsibility for the repair of the devastation of war, wherever it occurs in their territories and the resources of both shall be equally, and as one applied to that purpose

"During the war there shall be a single war Cabinet, and all the forces of Britain and France whether on land sea or in the air, will be placed under its direction. It will govern from wherever it best can. The two Parliaments will be formally associated

"The nations of the British Empire are already forming new armies. France will keep her available forces in the field on the sea, and in the air

"The Union appeals to the United States to fortify the economic resources of the Allies and to bring her powerful material aid to the common cause

"The Union will concentrate its whole energy against the power of the enemy no matter where the battle may be. And thus we shall conquer"

31 July, 1940

Mr. AMMON (Camberwell North). I think it will be generally agreed that the matter which I am about to raise is one

who are left there will undergo. The Channel Islands have no coal of their own and 70 per cent of their foodstuffs have to be imported. I have here an inventory of the total amount of foodstuffs, item by item, in the Islands when the evacuation took place. It is a curious thing that, as I think has been admitted, I have had more information than the Home Office on some of these points. Probably it would be well, for many reasons, if I did not read out the exact amounts involved in this inventory, but the hon. Gentleman can have it if he desires. When anybody goes short in the Islands, it will not be the Germans. We have something like 30 000 to 40,000 people there, with no means of communication with this country. They have been left behind, largely owing to a condition of muddle, and they are now in this very parlous condition. This is from another letter that I have received.

"I appreciate that there may still be a sufficiency of cattle in the Islands to feed the majority of the adult population. There cannot be enough flour or the means of growing it, or a reasonable subsistence to guarantee the continuance of the well-being of the people."

And this is from another letter, from a doctor living in the Islands:

"My home is in Guernsey and I do know that if food is not sent to the Islands, the people must starve."

In the face of all these things I suggest that I was not asking anything unreasonable when I said that a full statement ought to have been made to this House some time ago. I asked the right hon. Gentleman whether he would make a full statement to the House concerning the evacuation. I have been treated rather like

with the Islands after 28 June

MR. PEAKE: *When did my right hon. Friend deny that?*

MR. AMMON: In his answer to the Question asked by me last Thursday, when he said that the bombardment took place on the 28 June, and it was not possible to get into touch with the Islands. That is what happened then. Here is another correspondent who writes:

"The report in to day's *Telegraph* that the dates of invasion were two days following the 25 June is quite inaccurate. As already mentioned in my previous letter, I spoke over the telephone to my brother in Jersey on the afternoon of 29 June. Guernsey was invaded the following day and Jersey on 1 July."

I come finally to this point. I am sorry to have kept the House for so long on this matter, but I feel that it is one of vital importance to the credit and prestige of this nation. Here is a cutting from the Jersey "*Evening Post*" dated 19 June

"Shipping facilities were being provided by the Ministry of War Transport for the women between and, so .

When you add the other statements I have already read urging people to get out of the Islands, it tends to show the confusion that had arisen. I now read what I think is the crowning humiliation. It is the manifesto issued by the General Commanding the German Forces in Normandy.

"As evidence that the Island will surrender the military and other establishments without resistance and without destroying them a large White Cross is to be shown as follows, from 7 a.m. 2 July, 1940

- (a) In the centre of the Airport in the East of the Island
- (b) On the highest point of the fortifications of the port
- (c) On the square to the North of the inner Basin of the Harbour "

There is a good deal more that I could quote. It shows that the Germans were then in full possession. I want to ask whether the air port was left intact in order that it could be used in an offensive against our people. I received a statement from people who, just before the final invasion took place, went to the Home Office in order to get some help and make suggestions, and they told me that they were astonished to find the blind faith that the Home Office placed in the statement that if my friend

Press in a paper to which the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary called my attention when he answered a question from me a little while ago. In a letter that the Home Secretary wrote to me a day or two ago, in addition to answering questions, he stated that a number of boats left with hardly any people at all in them and that there was a difference of opinion with regard to evacuation. That is further evidence of the muddle. First, there was an evacuation which was stated to be compulsory, then it was to be voluntary, and then we had several authorities and others contradicting each other. At Guernsey there were thousands of people left on the quay, unable to get away. I have already read an extract from a letter from a man who said that he came over in a boat which was fitted out to carry 700 people but, in fact, carried 2,000. Here is a letter from another correspondent, who says

"He stated" —

he means the Home Secretary—

That is the case I want to put before the House in order to show the need for organisation in our Government Departments. The same Department is responsible for all the blundering and muddle with regard to refugees. There is another important thing which I almost overlooked, and that is that none of these people was allowed to take more than £20 from the island.

The Red Cross Society reports that no fewer than 2,000 applicants a day—people from the Channel Islands—have applied for relief. All this is an indictment against the Department that certainly wants answering and does show muddle, vacillation and a failure to realise the responsibilities of the position, to say nothing of the humiliation which every Britisher must feel because we walked out for the first time in history without making any stand whatsoever against the invader and let him do what he liked.

MR PARKER (Romford) I would like to support strongly the case made by the hon. Member for North Camberwell (Mr. Ammon), and I would like to know from the Home Office whether there was any definite Government policy at all about the question of the evacuation of the Channel Islands. I can quite understand why a certain number of farmers and people who have lived for generations on the islands would not want to leave, but a large part of the population ought to have been evacuated. It has been said that demilitarisation authorities until just before that it quite incorrect. I district organiser of the

"I think it is of importance to comment on the Question put by Mr. Shinwell and Sir John Anderson's reply. Mr. Shinwell asked, 'How long a period elapsed after demilitarisation before the Germans were informed?' The reply was that there was an interval of some days before demilitarisation was publicly announced. The reply, as

The German authorities must have got possession of papers from the islands fairly early and known that they were demilitarised and that therefore it was open to them to occupy the islands. Demilitarisation was thus announced on 19 June, the first raid was on 28 June, and the actual occupation took place on 30 June and 1 July. That gave considerable time to arrange for the evacuation of the islands. What seems so surprising is that you had considerable evacuation of school children and others immediately when demilitarisation was announced, and then a "Go slow" policy about evacuation. In fact, practically all the local people of importance did their best to discourage evacuation.

One of the most surprising statements of all is a speech by Jurat Dorey in the States Assembly, in which he said he had been sent over to the Home Office in London, where he saw two officials, Sir Alexander Maxwell and Mr C G Mackbreiter. Presumably he got advice from them as to what the British Government thought ought to be done by the island authorities. In his speech he condemned the policy of evacuation and denounced those who were trying to go overseas as rabbits and rats. Did he speak with the backing of the Home Office? What advice did those officials give him to put before the Jersey States when he got back? That ought to be stated fully. It seems to me that the whole policy of "Business as usual" preached by important people in the islands was a thoroughly wrong policy between 19 and 28 June, when the actual invasion took place, during the period in which there was an opportunity to get a large part of the population out.

A letter that I have received from Jersey says

"It is remarkable that the self same authorities who impressed on the islanders the necessity for business as usual stated at a meeting of licensed victuallers on the 28th that occupation by the Nazis must be expected at any time. German reconnaissance planes were in fact then flying over the town."

This information was passed to my correspondent over the telephone on 29th June and therefore can be taken as being pretty accurate. If the island authorities discouraged evacuation and then suddenly decided at the last moment that a German occupation was inevitable, why were they not informed by the British Government that an early occupation was expected and persuaded to change their minds? Many people who wanted to be evacuated were not evacuated.

With regard to the German air raids and the question of evacuation, I can quite understand that after the serious air raid on 28 June, it would have been difficult to organise evacuation, but I think a certain amount of evacuation could have been organised even between that date and the actual occupation on 30 June and 1 July. From telephone messages that came over continuously after the first raids took place, it seemed that there were very large numbers of people who ought to have been, and could have been, evacuated earlier had the British Government given a definite lead in the matter.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (MR PEAKE) The hon Member for North Camberwell (Mr Ammon) has, I think, rendered a service in raising this matter in the House this evening. In one part of his speech there were complaints that the boats carrying evacuees were too full and in another part there were complaints that the boats were too empty. There were complaints that too many people had come and complaints that too few people had come, complaints that the Government acted too precipitately and complaints that they acted too slowly. I was in some difficulty

at the end of the hon. Gentleman's speech to know precisely what he was complaining about.

MR. AMMON: The hon. Gentleman is trying to be a little too clever because he must know that in each of those parts of my speech I was answering specific statements of the Home Secretary who had said that boats had come away empty. I said that that was so in some ports but that in others they were over-crowded. The hon. Gentleman might do me the courtesy of answering me instead of indulging in these debating points.

MR. PEAKE: I am the last Member to attempt to score cheap points in debate and I hope the hon. Member will treat me with the courtesy with which I treated him. It seemed to me that a great part of his speech was a challenge to the decision to demilitarise the Channel Islands. I share his regret that that decision had to be taken. It was taken not by the Home Office but by the responsible military authorities upon purely military grounds. France had collapsed. The enemy were in possession of ports and aerodromes within a very few miles of the Channel Islands. Moreover, those islands were not and never have been heavily fortified.

The decision to demilitarise the islands was taken on 19 June. At the same meeting of the War Cabinet at which that decision was arrived at it was decided that every possible facility must be provided for the evacuation of such of the civilian population as desired to come to the mainland. There again I have not the slightest doubt that the decision taken was the right one. It was obvious that the decision to demilitarise the islands and the decision to provide for the evacuation of as many of the civilian population as desired to leave must be taken quickly and must be put into operation with very great secrecy. To have announced the demilitarisation at that stage publicly in this country or over the wireless would have been to invite the Germans to take immediate possession of the islands and for that reason no announcement was made in this country of the decision to demilitarise the islands. Inquiries show that the island authorities estimated that somewhere about 30,000 persons would desire to avail themselves of the facilities for evacuation and boats were immediately provided by the British Government and arrived in the islands on the following morning. Evacuation began on the morning of the 20th and continued for three or four days. It is obvious that there must have been very great searchings of heart among the people in the islands before coming to a decision whether to stay or whether to leave, but I do not think anybody would suggest that it would have been a wise thing to endeavour to enforce compulsory evacuation.

MR. PARKER: Can the hon. Gentleman say whether steps were taken to persuade the people to leave or whether the island authorities were asked to try to persuade them?

MR. PEAKE: As I have said, every possible facility was provided for them to leave, and an announcement, to which the hon. Member for North Camberwell referred, was made in the *Jersey Evening Post* of 19 June. This is one of the documents which he sent to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary. It said

"Shipping facilities are being provided by His Majesty's Government for the immediate voluntary evacuation to the United Kingdom of women and children. Similar facilities will also be available for men between the ages of 20 and 35 who wish to join His Majesty's Forces and so far as accommodation permits, for other men."

It goes on to set out the detailed arrangements. The question at issue on 19 June was whether it would or would not be wise to make evacuation compulsory. All the advice we had from the Island authorities tended to show that compulsory evacuation would be extremely unpopular and would, in fact, be unenforceable, that a great many of the Islanders were determined at all costs to remain upon the land which they had tilled for generations and in the homes which their families had occupied for hundreds of years. Compulsory evacuation was really quite out of the question. What we did, in fact, was to give a lead by

Guernsey and in Jersey. For instance, in Jersey, with a population of 50,000, only 6,600 people decided to leave. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has pointed out, in answer to a Question, that the last boats to leave Jersey were by no means full. On the other hand, in Guernsey, rather more people wished to come out than had been anticipated. Out of a population of 42,000 in Guernsey, a smaller population than that of Jersey, 17,000 came. Those two figures, coupled with 1,000, I think, from Alderney, made up a total of about 25,000 people who were evacuated from the Islands, as against an estimate of 30,000 by the Islands authorities when the policy was decided upon.

Of course, on a question of evacuation of this kind, people are apt to take different views. Men who occupied prominent positions in the islands issued a statement which was no doubt intended to express a view and represent a general opinion. There

utmost capacity, but, as I have said, other boats, coming from Jersey, were not so full. The remarkable thing is that 25,000 volunteers should have been got out of the islands between the decision to demilitarise on the morning of the 19th, and the evening of the 23rd. That, I think, is a very remarkable achievement in the circumstances.

SIR J. MELLOR. But was not varying advice given by the island authorities? Was not the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty right when he said that sometimes they were told that they should hasten to get out and that at other times they were told that they would be yellow if they did?

MR. PEAKE. I am prepared to concede that point to the hon. Gentleman, and I daresay that at different times different advice was in fact required by the exigencies of the situation. After all, the island authorities were the people on the spot. They saw what was happening. They saw whether there was any tendency to confusion among the people, and I have not the slightest doubt that they gave *bona fide* advice to the best of their ability.

MR. PARKER. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but surely the point at issue is this. Did the Home Office of this country bring pressure of any kind upon the island authorities to persuade them to encourage evacuation or not?

MR. PEAKE. No, Sir. What the authorities of this country did was to say, "We must give the people in the Channel Islands opportunities and facilities for evacuation, and leave it to them to decide whether they desire to come to this country or not." I have already quoted the statement in the Jersey Press of 19 June, and the hon. Gentleman referred to a reassuring proclamation which was issued in Guernsey on the 20th, in which some of the leading citizens, the Bailiff, the Crown Officers and others say

"We wish the people of this island to know for their guidance and assistance in the decision which each must take for himself that we are remaining at our posts to carry on our respective duties."

I do not think that that is a public statement about which anybody can make any criticism whatsoever. The leading citizens decided, in order to reassure the people and to give confidence, that for their part they would stay in the islands and stick to their jobs. What in fact happened? It is perfectly true that there were people who desired to leave Guernsey for whom facilities were not available, but that was after the aerial bombardment on the morning of 28 June, and it is not in the least surprising that people who thought that things were going to be quiet and that it would be safer to stay in the islands, after the aerial bombardment on the morning of 28 June should have changed their minds and decided that they would in fact prefer to be evacuated.

MR LESLIE Was it not the case that the quay was crowded with people on the day the Germans dropped their bombs on the quay and killed people, while the boats were packed with potatoes and tomatatoes

MR PEAKE It may be true that on the morning of 28 June potatoes and tomatoes were being shipped. If it was the morning when the Germans came over and dropped bombs on the harbour, it was exceedingly fortunate that the ships were not being loaded at that time with human beings, because had there been evacuation in progress either voluntarily or compulsorily, a disaster of a very serious kind would have taken place.

MR AMMON I am loth to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but he is unintentionally giving a misleading statement. As a matter of fact, this was on the 27th before the bombardment took place.

MR PEAKE The 27th?

MR AMMON The day before the raid. Posters were put round the island saying "Do not be yellow and evacuate." What is more, individuals went along the queues of people telling them to go back.

MR PEAKE I have not seen these posters saying "Do not be yellow," but it is possible that the island authorities did give advice of that sort. I must confess that I should be horrified if a poster of that kind were put up in this country, but it is not a matter on which the Home Office can take any responsibility whatever. This is the first time I have heard of these posters.

MR AMMON No, I raised the question in the House a fortnight ago.

MR PEAKE There is not the slightest evidence that anybody who wished to be evacuated before the bombardment—which, I now recollect, took place on the evening of the 28th—was prevented from coming to this country by lack of accommodation. It was only after the bombardment that a considerable number of people who either had decided in the first place not to go or had registered for evacuation on the first day and then had changed their minds, decided to go and that large numbers of people who wished to come to this country were unable to do so.

There are two other small points with which I want to deal. The hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Parker) asked whether any proper military precautions were taken to make the airport unusable. My information is that instructions for making it unusable for a considerable time were given and there is no reason to suppose that they were not carried out. But in regard to this question of the evacuation of the islands, the Government

have nothing whatever with which to reproach themselves. I wish that on all matters the Government and the Home Office had as perfectly clear a conscience as they have on this question of the Channel Islands.

4 July, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL) It is with sincere sorrow that I must now announce to the House the measures which we have felt bound to take in order to prevent the French Fleet from falling into German hands. When two nations are fighting together under long and solemn alliance against a common foe, one of them may be stricken down and overwhelmed, and may be forced to ask its Ally to release it from its obligations. But the least that could be expected was that the French Government, in abandoning the conflict and leaving its whole weight to fall upon Great Britain and the British Empire, would have been careful not to inflict needless injury upon their faithful comrade, in whose final victory the sole chance of French freedom lay, and lies.

As the House will remember, we offered to give full release to the French from their Treaty obligations, although these were designed for precisely the case which arose, on one condition, namely, that the French Fleet should be sailed for British harbours before the separate armistice negotiations with the enemy were completed. This was not done, but on the contrary, in spite of every kind of private and personal promise and assurance given by Admiral Darlan to the First Lord and to his Naval colleague the First Sea Lord of the British Admiralty, an armistice was signed which was bound to place the French Fleet as effectively in the power of Germany and its Italian following as that portion of the French Fleet which was placed in our power when many of them, being unable to reach African ports, came into the harbours of Portsmouth and Plymouth about 10 days ago. Thus I must place on record that what might have been a great relief to us by the French Fleet being released, has in fact been a consequence which has been a great loss to us. It is a loss which is being felt at the moment, and which is being felt at the moment by the breaking of the engagements which fortified it.

There was another example of this callous and perhaps even malevolent treatment which we received, not indeed from the French nation, who have never been and apparently never are to be consulted upon these transactions, but from the Bordeaux Government. This is the instance. There were over 400 German air pilots who were prisoners in France, many of them, perhaps most of them, shot down by the Royal Air Force. I obtained from M. Reynaud a personal promise that these pilots should be sent for safe keeping to England and orders were given by him to that effect, but when M. Reynaud fell, these pilots were delivered over to Germany in order, no doubt, to win favour for

the Bordeaux Government with their German masters, and to

Such wrongful deeds I am sure will not be condoned by history, and I firmly believe that a generation of Frenchmen will arise who will clear their national honour from all countenance of them

I said last week that we must now look with particular attention to our own salvation. I have never in my experience seen so grim and sombre a question as what we were to do about the French

... shows how strong were the reasons it our duty to take, that every ... same conviction about what

should be done and there was not the slightest hesitation or divergence among them, and that the three Service Ministers, as well as men like the Minister of Information and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, particularly noted for their long friendship with France, when they were consulted were equally convinced that no other decision than that which we took was possible. We took that decision, and it was a decision to which, with aching hearts but with clear vision, we unitedly came. Accordingly early yesterday morning, 3 July, after all preparations had been made, we took the greater part of the French Fleet under our control, or else called upon them, with adequate force, to comply with our requirements. Two battleships, two light cruisers, some submarines, including a very large one, the *Surcouf*, eight destroyers and approximately 200 smaller but extremely useful minesweeping and anti submarine craft which lay, for the most part at Portsmouth and Plymouth, though there were some at Sheerness, were boarded by superior forces, after brief notice had been given wherever possible to their captains.

This operation was successfully carried out without resistance or bloodshed except in one instance. A scuffle arose through a misunderstanding in the submarine *Surcouf*, in which one British leading seaman was killed and two British officers and one rating wounded and one French officer killed and one wounded. For the rest, the French sailors in the main, cheerfully accepted the end of a period of uncertainty. A considerable number, 800 or 900, have expressed an ardent desire to continue the war, and some have asked for British nationality. This we are ready to grant without prejudice to the other Frenchmen, numbered by thousands, who prefer to fight on with us as Frenchmen. All the rest of those crews will be immediately repatriated to French ports, if the French Government are able to make arrangement for their reception by permission of their German rulers. We are also repatriating all French troops who were in this country, excepting those who, of their own free will, have volunteered to

His Majesty, and upon our Allies, and well-wishers—and they are not a few—all over the world, on both sides of the Atlantic, to give us their utmost aid. In the fullest harmony with our Dominions, we are moving through a period of extreme danger and of splendid hope, when every virtue of our race will be tested, and all that we have and are will be freely staked. This is no time for doubt or weakness. It is the supreme hour to which we have been called.

I will venture to read to the House a message which I have caused to be sent to all the Houses of the Imperial Parliaments under the name of the King, and which I should have read myself, but for his own illness. I will read the message:

“On what may be the eve of an attempted invasion or battle for our nation, I, the Prime Minister, beg to inform the House of Commons.”

more German troops can be landed in this country, either from the air or across the sea, than can be destroyed or captured by the strong forces at present under arms. The Royal Air Force is in excellent order and at the highest strength it has yet attained. The German Navy was never so weak, nor the British Army at home so strong as now. The Prime Minister expects all His Majesty's servants in high places to set an example of steadfastness and resolution. They should actively

sciously exercising a disturbing or depressing influence, and whose talk is calculated to spread alarm and despondency. Thus alone will they be worthy of the fighting men who, in the air, on the sea, and on land, have already met the enemy without any sense of being outmatched in martial qualities.”

In conclusion I feel that we are entitled to the confidence of the House and that we shall not fail in our duty, however painful

negotiations in any form and through any channel with the German and Italian Governments. We shall, on the contrary, prosecute the war with the utmost vigour by all the means that are open to us until the righteous purposes for which we entered upon it have been fulfilled.

9 July, 1940

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the Secretary of State for War whether he has yet taken any action in connection with the French Legion and other troops; whether such members of the Legion

as decide to continue to fight for us under British officers will be given the option of taking up British citizenship, as in the case of the French Navy?

MR EDEN General de Gaulle has been officially recognised, and French troops are being organised under his command. As was stated by my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary in reply to a Question on 4 July last, it has been decided in principle to afford special facilities to French citizens who continue to serve the French Government. It is, of course, impossible to apply to any

9 July, 1940

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (MR A. V. ALEXANDER) The House will remember that on 4 July the Prime Minister described the painful but very necessary action we had taken on the previous day to prevent units of the French Fleet, lying in British and North African ports, passing into enemy control. Since that date the Royal Navy have carried out two other operations designed to increase the security of this country against the use of French warships by the enemy. On 6 July a French battle-cruiser of the *Dunkerque* class, which had been damaged and driven ashore at Oran, was attacked by aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm, which obtained six hits. As a result this powerful ship will be incapable of effective use for a very long time to come. Apart from the ships thus dealt with, there lay at Dakar, in French West Africa, the 35,000-ton battleship *Richelieu*, which had just been completed, and which was the most modern and formidable capital ship in the world, immediately available for active operations.

In accordance with the decision announced to the House by the Prime Minister, His Majesty's Government decided that steps must also be taken to ensure that this vessel did not fall into enemy hands in a condition in which she could be used against us. A force was accordingly despatched to Dakar with order to present to the French Admiral there proposals similar to those offered to the French Commander at Oran. On 7 July the Flag Officer entrusted with this operation sent one of his captains ahead in a sloop in order to present the terms in person. On arrival this ship was informed by the French authorities that they would open fire if she approached close to the port, and it was only after an interval that the French consented to receive this communication by signal. In view of the statements which have been made by the French Government concerning the terms offered at Oran, I think it is desirable that I should recapitulate now those put to the Admiral at Dakar.

His Majesty's Government offered four alternatives. Firstly, that the French ships should be escorted to a British port with a view to their being repatriated, and at the same time to be sent to France; secondly, that

to a French port in the West Indies where they could be demilitarised keeping, within two within a ti

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accede to any of the British suggestions, he had no alternative but to carry out his painful duty in the early hours of 8 July

The attack upon the *Richelieu* was twofold. A ship's boat, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander R. H. Bristowe, R.N., was sent into the harbour carrying depth charges. With great daring the boat successfully passed the boom defences and went alongside the port quarter of the *Richelieu*. At the right moment depth charges were dropped close under the stern of the warship as she lay at anchor in the shallow water in order to damage her propellers and steering gear. The motor-boat began to withdraw immediately after dropping the depth charges, but while still in the harbour broke down and lay helpless for a time.

The crew, however, succeeded in getting one engine running just as they were discovered, and the boat, which was pursued, just managed to escape by crossing the harbour defence nets, which held its pursuer. I am sure that the House will join me in paying tribute to the gallantry and skill with which this operation was carried out, for it must be obvious that whoever undertook an operation like that ran the risk the whole time of blowing himself up.

The main attack was entrusted to aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm and took place after the attack by the motor-boat. These aircraft were successful with their torpedoes, a number of which hit the *Richelieu*. The motor boat, which was still in the harbour, witnessed the aircraft attack, heard five explosions and then saw smoke issuing from the battleship. Air reconnaissance since carried out has established that the *Richelieu* has a list to port and is down by the stern. A large quantity of oil fuel covers the water around the ship. All our aircraft returned safely, in spite of heavy anti-aircraft fire. I would desire, and I am sure the House would pay tribute to the skill, efficiency and courage with which this action has been carried out by the officers and men concerned.

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have now passed under our control, one has been sunk, and one has been badly damaged and immobilised. That makes five of these two classes. Of two modern battle-cruisers, one has been driven ashore at Oran and, as I have already mentioned, will be

out of action for a long time to come, if not permanently. The other, as the Prime Minister told the House, managed to escape and is presumed to have reached Toulon, but only after having been hit by a torpedo, which will immobilise her for some time. The state of the *Richelieu*, the seventh ship, has been described already this afternoon. There remains, in addition, only the sister ship of the *Richelieu*, the *Jean Bart*, which will not, however, be completed for operational service for some months to come.

I need not emphasise that the transfer of this powerful modern capital fleet to the enemy might have altered the whole balance of naval strength, with incalculable results to our cause. As a result of the measures we have taken, this grave anxiety is now removed. Perhaps the House will permit me to add a word of thanks to our Naval Staff, who had to plan these recent operations immediately with and following the completion of the evacuation in face of the enemy of troops and refugees totalling not fewer than 600,000, the greatest achievement of its kind in the history of naval operations and a remarkable tribute to the value of our sea power, a power which we do not intend to lose. Rather we intend to prevent the seaborne invasion of this island or the escape of any marauders who dare to set foot here.

MR R. C. MORRISON When the four alternative proposals were rejected, did the Admiral of the French battleship make any alternative suggestion?

MR ALEXANDER The French Admiral made no other suggestion at all.

MR GALLACHER In view of the traditions of the French people and sailors, was it not possible to make an appeal to the French sailors to take over the ship and immobilise it?

MR ALEXANDER It was made clear by the Prime Minister that His Majesty's Government made an appeal to the people in charge of the Fleet to sail with us and fight with us.

MISS RATHBONE What steps have been taken to make known to the French people the terms, because they have been so ingeniously suppressed by the Petain Government?

MR ALEXANDER I believe steps have been taken by the Ministry of Information. Perhaps the hon. Lady will put that Question down.

MR HANNAH Can we not express sympathy with the relatives of the French sailors?

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR Is it not very difficult to get the truth to the French sailors in this country? Some of us tried very hard to let them know what was going on, but it was absolutely forbidden.

MR ALEXANDER. I think that question should be put on the Paper. Of course, there is no Member of the Government, and certainly no officer or man of the British Fleet, who does not regret to the utmost that this action has been necessary. I may add that the commanding officer in charge of the operations sent a personal signal to the French Admiral after they were over expressing his regret at having to carry out these painful duties and hoping there were no casualties.

On 14 July, the French National Festival in honour of the Fall of the Bastille in 1789, Mr Churchill broadcast to the nation "We fight alone," he said, "in this strong city of refuge, which enshrines the title deeds of human progress." He found no room for dismay and no sign of weakness. A million and a half men stood to arms and behind them were a million Home Guards. Over a thousand armed ships, under the White Ensign patrolled the seas. Every village, every town and every city would be defended. Efforts must be redoubled until, in 1942, the war will take a different form from the defensive in which it has hitherto been bound.

There follow a few replies to questions which indicate the sustained interest of the Commons in the relations of the war and our diplomacy. The possibilities of our extension of the war in the Middle East and the Far East occupied many minds. The effects of the German occupation of the West European coastline upon the blockade and shipping services called for new policies, but Mr Greenwood was able, early in August, to speak without pessimism of the enemy's economic position.

13 June, 1940

RUSSIA (BRITISH AMBASSADOR)

SIR P. HANNON asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when His Majesty's Ambassador to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics will take up his duties, whether any special powers have been conferred upon the Ambassador apart from the ordinary functions which pertain to his office, and whether any change has been made in the grants and allowances hitherto made to this embassy?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR BUTLER). The hon and learned Member for East Bristol (Sir S. Cripps) has now arrived in Moscow and has taken up his duties as His Majesty's Ambassador. He will occupy the post in the same capacity in all respects as previous Ambassadors have done. He will not receive a salary but expenses in the form of a representation allowance appropriate to his position.

11 July, 1940

GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

towards Russia was to direct attacks against the Baku oilfields; and whether he can give a categorical denial to those allegations, and assure the House that the policy of the Government is to improve and strengthen the relations between this country and the Soviet Union?

Mr BUTLER Yes, Sir The policy of His Majesty's Government is to improve and strengthen the relations between this country and the Soviet Union.

made a friendly approach to His Majesty's Government and proposed the resumption of trade negotiations. This move on their part constituted a welcome departure from the unfriendly attitude which the Soviet Government had adopted ever since the breakdown of the political negotiations in August of last year. His Majesty's Government at once responded to this approach by the Soviet Government, and it is to be hoped that the discussions on which His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow is at present engaged may finally remove any danger which may have been apprehended that the Soviet Government would work either economically or militarily against Great Britain in the interests of Germany. Ever since the outbreak of war, His Majesty's Government have had to guard against this danger when making their military plans. It was natural, therefore, that the Staffs, who in a totalitarian war have to consider all future hypotheses, should consider how to counter Russian assistance to Germany. Apart from actual military assistance, one of the most valuable forms of help which the Soviet Government were in a position to give Germany was to supply her with oil from the Caucasus. It was thus the duty of the General Staffs to examine whether in certain eventualities it would be possible to interfere with the output of oil from the Caucasian wells. I might add that no attempt was made at any time to enlist the co-operation or acquiescence of either Turkey or Iran in these hypothetical plans. I trust that this statement will dispel any false and mischievous impressions which German propaganda has sought to create.

7 August, 1940

GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA (TRADE NEGOTIATIONS)

Mr. NEIL MACLEAN asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that an Iranian delegation arrived in Moscow to discuss questions of railway transport connected with the Soviet-Iranian Trade Agreement; that trade negotiations are proceeding, and whether the Government are in communication with our representative in Moscow and the Union of Soviet Socialist

Republics Government; if so, when, and what progress has been made towards a satisfactory agreement being quickly concluded?

MR BUTLER My noble Friend has recently sent instructions to His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow to seek a further interview with the People's Commissar for Foreign Trade, M Mikoyan, His Majesty's (the Soviet Government) representative in London, that negotiations should make as rapid progress as possible. I have seen reports that Soviet-Iranian, Soviet-Swedish and Soviet-German negotiations connected with trade matters are in progress.

MR MACLEAN Have definite instructions been given, and a programme outlined, to our representative there so that he can place them before the Russian Foreign Minister?

details have been sufficiently investigated and that the views of His Majesty's Government are well known

18 July, 1940

ANGLO JAPANESE AGREEMENT

SIR JOHN WARDLAW-MILNE (by *Private Notice*) asked the Prime Minister whether he can make a statement on the recent Japanese demand for the stoppage of supplies to China through Hong Kong and Burma?

THE PRIME MINISTER On 24 June the Japanese Government requested His Majesty's Government to take measures to stop the transit to China via Burma of war material and certain other goods. A similar request was made in respect of Hong Kong. The continuance of the transit of these materials was represented as having a serious effect on Anglo Japanese relations.

An agreement has now been reached with the Japanese Government as follows

Hong Kong—The export of arms and ammunition from Hong Kong has been prohibited since January, 1939, and none of the war materials to which the Japanese Government attach importance are in fact being exported.

Burma—The Government of Burma have agreed to suspend for a period of three months the transit to China of arms and ammunition as well as the following articles—petrol, lorries and railway material.

The categories of goods prohibited in Burma will be prohibited in Hong Kong.

In considering the requests made by the Japanese Government and in reaching the agreement to which I have referred, His

Majesty's Government were not unmindful of the various obligations accepted by this country including their obligations to the National Government of China and to the British territories affected. His Majesty's Government were however also bound to have regard to the present world situation, nor could they ignore the dominant fact that we are ourselves engaged in a life and death struggle.

The general policy of this country towards the Far Eastern troubles has been repeatedly defined. We have persistently asserted our desire to see assured to China a free and independent future, and we have as frequently expressed our desire to improve our relations with Japan.

To achieve these objectives two things were essential—time and a relief of tension. On the one hand it was clear that the tension was rapidly growing owing to the Japanese complaints about the passage of war material by the Burma route. On the other, to agree to the permanent closure of the route would be to default from our obligations as a neutral friendly Power to China. What we have therefore made is a temporary arrangement in the hope that the time so gained may lead to a solution just and equitable to both parties to the dispute, and freely accepted by them both.

We wish for no quarrel with any nation in the Far East. We desire to see China's status and integrity preserved, and as was indicated in our Note of 14 January, 1939, we are ready to negotiate with the Chinese Government after the conclusion of peace, the abolition of extra territorial rights, the rendition of concessions and the revision of treaties on the basis of reciprocity and equality. We wish to see Japan attain that state of prosperity which will ensure to her population the welfare and economic security which every Japanese naturally desires. Towards the attainment of the aims of both these countries we are prepared to offer our collaboration and our contribution. But it must be clear that if they are to be attained, it must be by a process of peace and conciliation and not by war or threat of war.

MR NOEL-BAKER: May we rightly interpret that statement as meaning that His Majesty's Government have no desire to impose peace terms on the Chinese people, or to urge them to accept peace terms which they regard as surrender to aggression?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I would not wish to add to my reply.

MR NOEL-BAKER: May we respectfully interpret the statement as meaning that His Majesty's Government have no desire to impose peace terms on the Chinese people, or to urge them to accept peace terms which they regard as surrender to aggression?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I have read out a statement, which I have very carefully prepared and considered. My views

in the past on this matter are well known. I should hesitate to try to improvise any addition to my statement now.

MR. HORE BELISHA: Is my right hon. Friend satisfied that this concession made to Japan will, in fact, secure the good will of that country towards this country, and has he operated throughout in consultation and in so far as that may be possible, in agreement with the United States and Soviet Governments?

THE PRIME MINISTER: I can give no such assurance as is asked for in the first part of the question. I do not intend to

31 July, 1940

ANGLO JAPANESE AGREEMENT (BURMA)

MR. MANDER asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what rights have been granted to the Japanese in respect of inspection of traffic passing under the recent Agreement on the Burma road, how many persons are now included in the Japanese diplomatic and consular staff in Burma, and to what extent these numbers are to be increased, and for what purpose?

MR. BUTLER: The recent Agreement does not grant rights of inspection to the Japanese authorities in Burma. There is no Japanese diplomatic staff in Burma, and the only Japanese Consulate is situated at Rangoon. The staff of the Consulate consists of a Consul, two Japanese Chancellors, two Japanese clerks, one Burman and one Indian clerk. No recent increase has occurred, and I have no information of any intended increase.

14 August, 1940

EMPIRE WAR MATERIAL (JAPAN)

MR. MANDER asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is proposed to continue the supply of oil and other articles required for war purposes from British sources to Japan in view of the refusal of such supplies to China by the closing of the Burma Road, whether the action of the United States of America in refusing to supply oil to Japan will be borne in mind in making proposals for the export of such materials, and whether such proposals are under consideration?

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR BUTLER) I have no statement to make at present on the first two points raised by the hon Member. As to the third, I would refer him to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Economic Warfare on 6 August to the hon. Member for Romford (Mr Parker)

11 July, 1940.

RUMANIA

SIR T MOORE asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Rumania is still adopting an attitude of complete neutrality, and whether he can make any statement on the subject?

MR BUTLER. I would refer my hon and gallant Friend to the declaration of policy which the Rumanian Government have themselves issued within the last few days

Following is the declaration :

"In foreign relations the Government intends to follow a policy of sincere assimilation to the system created by the Berlin-Rome Axis, and that, not only as an expression of political realism, but also as it is the logical consequence of the political ideology of its members, who are the true interpreters of the sentiments of the nation. Simultaneously the Government intends with all its forces to maintain the best and

road of such a policy. As for other countries, the Government considers it a duty to collaborate at present and in future in everything which may serve the supreme purpose of peace and European reconstruction"

17 July, 1940.

GREAT BRITAIN AND RUMANIA

MR MANDER asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British guarantee to Rumania remains in force?

Majesty's Government and by the French Government. In the circumstances which have now arisen His Majesty's Government do not, so far as they themselves are concerned, consider that any further obligation devolves upon them under its terms.

23 July, 1940

CZECHOSLOVAKIA (PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT).

MR. MANDER asked the Prime Minister whether he can now make a statement with regard to the granting of official recognition to a Czechoslovak Government on the same lines as that granted to the Polish Government, bearing particularly in mind the recognition already granted to the National Czechoslovak Committee and the Czechoslovak army, the existence of a Czechoslovak legation in London, and the importance of placing all Allies in the same political position ?

THE PRIME MINISTER *Communications have recently passed between my Noble Friend on the one side and Dr Benes on behalf of the Czechoslovak National Committee on the other, concerning the recognition of the Czechoslovak National Committee as a Provisional Czechoslovak Government. As the result of these communications, Dr Benes informed my Noble Friend of the composition of the Provisional Czechoslovak Government, in which several new members joined the previous members of the Czechoslovak National Committee, and requested the recognition by His Majesty's Government of the newly constituted Provisional Czechoslovak Government. This recognition was granted on 21 July in a letter from my Noble Friend to Dr Benes in the following terms :*

" In the light of exchanges of view which have taken place between us, I have the honour to inform you that, in response to the request of the Czechoslovak National Committee, His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are happy to recognise and enter into relations with the Provisional Czechoslovak Government established by the Czechoslovak National Committee to function in this country. His Majesty's Government will be glad to discuss with the representatives of the provisional Government certain questions arising out of this recognition which require settlement "

11 July, 1940

ABYSSINIA

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether contact has been made between the British Government and the Emperor of Ethiopia, whether the Emperor's government will be recognised as the lawful government of Ethiopia and admitted to the full status of an ally in the present war, with assurances that Ethiopia's independence will be assured when the war is won ; and whether, in consequence contact will be made with General Abeha Aragur, who is commanding the Ethiopian forces in the field and with Ras Birru, formerly war minister of Abyssinia, who recently flew from Jerusalem to the Sudan to join the Ethiopian forces on the Emperor's behalf, in order that the British and Ethiopian forces may co-ordinate their activities against the Italians in Ethiopia ?

MR BUTLER Yes, Sir While the right hon and gallant Gentleman will readily understand that it is not possible to go into any detail in answering his Question, I can assure him that His Majesty's Government realise the importance of co ordinating all activities likely to damage the enemy's military effort in North and East Africa and in Abyssinia

30 July, 1940

ECONOMIC WARFARE

THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC WARFARE (MR DALTON) German occupation of the West European coastline from the North Cape to the Pyrenees has greatly changed the conditions of the economic war The German Armies have succeeded in overrunning large parts of Western Europe, but the overseas imports which they require are still barred from the seas commanded by the Royal Navy Many fewer ships are now engaged on legitimate neutral trade between Europe and the Americas Moreover, the Mediter-
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ing many
British war

imposing such grave inconveniences upon shippers, shipowners and crews His Majesty's Government have decided to extend the navicert system to all seaborne goods consigned to any European port, as well as to certain Atlantic islands and to certain neutral ports in North Africa. In future ships sailing from a neutral port to any such destination must obtain navicerts for all items of cargo, and in addition a ship navicert at the last port of loading. Any consignment not navicerted and any ship without a ship navicert, will henceforth be liable to seizure by our patrols. The same rules will apply to outgoing trade. Ships sailing from European ports, or from certain Atlantic islands, or from certain neutral ports in North Africa must have certificates of non-enemy origin for all items of their cargoes, and any ship whose cargo is not fully certificated will be liable to be seized together with all uncertificated items of the cargo. An Order in Council giving effect to these changes will be issued forthwith.

It has been suggested in some quarters that we intend to extend the blockade to certain neutral countries. This is not so

policy of His Majesty's Government not merely to allow such adequate supplies to pass through our controls, but to assist neutral countries to obtain them. These measures will greatly benefit those engaged in honest neutral trade. Delays in such trade, due

to the exercise of our controls, will be much reduced. At the same time, a heavy blow will be struck at those who seek to elude our controls and to carry supplies either to or from the enemy. Our friends will be further encouraged, and our enemies discomforted, by some ingenious provision which my right hon. Friend, the Minister of Shipping, will, I understand, immediately announce.

Finally, I would recall that on 2 July I informed the House that contraband control had been extended to French territory under enemy control and that no goods were being allowed to reach the enemy through unoccupied France. After a most careful review of all the circumstances, His Majesty's Government have now decided, with regret, that in present conditions they must treat all metropolitan France, as well as Algeria, Tunisia and French Morocco, in the same manner, for the purposes of contraband and enemy export control, as enemy-controlled territory. Goods destined for these territories are, therefore, liable to be seized as contraband and goods originating in, or owned by persons in, such territories, are liable to be placed in prize. These steps, which I have now announced, are designed to smooth the path of genuine neutral trade, while increasing the strength of our blockade and avoiding all unnecessary calls upon the Royal Navy.

SPAIN (OIL IMPORTS)

MR. SILKIN asked the Minister of Economic Warfare whether shipments of oil and oil-products to Spain from America are greatly in excess of last year's quantities, whether he has information to show that oil is reaching Germany from Spain, and whether he will give an assurance that every endeavour will be made to ensure that no more oil reaches Spain than she legitimately requires for her own normal consumption?

MR. DALTON. Shipments of oil and oil products to Spain from America during the first half of this year have been substantially greater than during the corresponding period of last year. Before the collapse of France the only route by which oil could reach Germany from Spain was by sea across the Western Mediterranean and through Italy, and we relied upon French naval patrols to prevent such traffic. Since the collapse of France many features of the situation have become obscure, and I am sending an officer of my Ministry to Spain this week in order to confer with the Spanish authorities and with His Majesty's Ambassador at Madrid. The desire of His Majesty's Government is to enable Spain to receive adequate supplies of oil for her own internal consumption, but not for re-export, and to maintain her oil stocks at a reasonable and steady level.

MR. SILKIN. In view of the fact that the exports for this year are greater than last year, is it not obvious that Spain has been

allowed to accumulate stocks of oil which may possibly be used against us?

MR QUINTIN HOGG In view of the fact that Spain is non-belligerent why give her any oil at all?

MR DALTON In the light of the answer I gave, I think it is evident that the stocks of oil in Spain are likely to be at a higher level now than they were a year ago, and it is precisely to investigate this and kindred matters that I am sending my oil adviser to Spain.

MR HOGG Will I assume the hon. Gentleman's answer is that the stocks of oil in Spain are likely to be at a higher level now than they were a year ago, and it is precisely to investigate this and kindred matters that I am sending my oil adviser to Spain?

MR DALTON The stocks of oil, when ascertained, will obviously be an element in determining the future import requirements. With regard to Italy, I hope we have all learned a lesson from that experience.

MR SHINWELL asked the Minister of Economic Warfare whether he had any information on the imports of lubricating oil into Spain, and whether he has any reason to believe that some portion of this oil is passing into German hands?

MR DALTON Yes Sir, I have a good deal of information on the subject of these imports. I have no evidence of re-exports of lubricating oil to Germany, but stocks in Spain appear to be so high relatively to domestic consumption that no navicerts are now being issued.

30 July, 1940

NEUTRAL SHIPPING (GOVERNMENT MEASURES)

MR SHINWELL asked the Minister of Shipping what steps he proposes to take to prevent neutral shipping resources being used by the enemy?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING (MR CROSS) The course of the war has made necessary new measures for the control of shipping. A large volume of shipping is already under British and Allied control, and this includes a substantial tonnage of neutral shipping on British time charter. While His Majesty's Government remain prepared to take further tonnage upon charter, they propose other measures to ensure that so far as possible shipping which is not controlled by the Allies will not find employment in trades which would in any way benefit the enemy.

Hitherto the widespread and important shipping facilities under British control have been freely available to all vessels. Such facilities include the provision of bunkers, dry docking and repairing, insurance stores and many minor services. It is not reasonable that these facilities should continue to be freely available to shipowners who do not render commensurate service in return or to those who fail to satisfy His Majesty's Government that they will refrain from carrying on trade which would be injurious to the Allied war effort. The possession of a ship's navicert for every voyage to which the navicert system applies will be essential. Neutral owners who have not already entered into satisfactory arrangements on these lines are invited to do so and to supply His Majesty's Government with such particulars as may be necessary to establish the character of the trade on which their ships are engaged. Those who give acceptable undertakings will receive for each of their ships a pass called a ship's warrant which will assure them of continued access to the available commercial shipping facilities under British control. Ships which are unable to produce a ship's warrant will be subject to separate inquiries on each occasion on which they desire facilities under British control. This must at least mean delay and inconvenience. I hope that all shipowners affected will lose no time in signing the necessary undertaking themselves or instructing their London representatives to do so.

The scheme comes into operation forthwith. Shipowners or their representatives desirous of participating in the scheme can obtain information as to the undertaking required and as to the scheme generally by application to the Ministry of Shipping.

MR SHINWELL Bearing on the question of the use of neutral shipping resources will the Minister give his attention to the subversive activities now being employed in the United States and other countries as regards neutral seamen? Is he aware that many neutral seamen are now being subverted from their allegiance to this country?

MR CROSS That matter has already had my attention for some weeks past and I am doing everything possible to deal with the situation.

7 August 1940

THE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (MR ARTHUR GREENWOOD) Let us in order to put ourselves in good heart consider the economic position of the enemy. Hitler in his

He also told us that his total amount of supplies to the army and the air force, and for all services, was considerably greater than before his attack in the West. That, no doubt, is true, as, of course, it is true of this country, but we must look at the picture a little more closely. It is true that Hitler commands the West of Europe from the Arctic Circle to the Pyrenees, a vast coastline 2,000 miles in length. It is true that he has brought many millions of people under his sway, but we must not assume that this great stretch of coast is necessarily an overwhelming asset to Hitler. Nor must we assume that he has made millions of friends. Hitler rules over sullen people who may prove to be liabilities rather than

but he cannot add starvation to slavery without running the grave risk of revolution within his own territory.

Hitler is, in fact, beset by serious problems within his swollen

Speaker, I wonder. I fancy that, as winter draws on, Hitler will his aggression is newly-seized ramped down

for our deadly bombing planes, night by night and week by week, and more and more heavily, as our bombing strength increases. Output vital to the enemy has, undoubtedly, been interfered with very seriously and it will be difficult, if not impossible, to repair the damage which has been done to productive enterprises, transport, lines of communication and valuable stores, for a considerable time to come. He will need to draw more and more on his resources. The more vigorously he prosecutes the war, the more rapidly his stores will disappear, and he will find it increasingly difficult to maintain his production to meet wastage and losses, notwithstanding his very highly-organised industrial system. It may be thought that with the Western ports of Europe at his full disposal, the enemy will be able to satisfy his present need for imports, but the British Navy, the Ministry of Economic Warfare

House, the measures which are being taken now to ensure that Hitler shall not draw sustenance from foreign sources. Not only Germany, but the territories which he now controls will be unable to carry on trade on any scale with the outside world. The blockade operates over a wide area, which must become more and more impoverished as its arteries are cut.

I have no doubt that Hitler has seized and will continue to seize all the food and materials he can from the territories he has overrun. He will ransack every cupboard, but once he has despoiled his victims supplies will either cease or become, in future, much less plentiful. Hitler boasted in his speech that he possessed unlimited quantities of what he called the two most vital raw materials, coal and iron. I do not wish to pursue this problem in any detail. Iron, he possesses in great quantities and he probably has no need to fear a shortage of aluminium, but his coal situation is different and his supplies henceforth will be seriously short. He may sit upon mountains of iron ore, but if he has not the coal whereby the iron ore can be smelted, it will not be of first-class military value to him. On balance, in a normal year,

those two illustrations merely as pointers to the situation in which Hitler now finds himself economically. If and when the real pinch comes, as it will sooner or later, in a hundred different directions, it is more than doubtful whether the subdued peoples of Germany and other lands will be prepared or able to stand the strain.

15 August, 1940

SOMALILAND OPERATIONS

THE PRIME MINISTER. I have some unsatisfactory news for the House about Somaliland. The small British holding force which was occupying the Tug Argen position to the North-East of Hargeisa has been driven back by greatly superior Italian forces, amounting to about two divisions, including armoured vehicles and considerable artillery. As operations are still in progress, I cannot say any more, but I shall be dealing generally with the Eastern situation next week.

CHAPTER IV

BRITAIN ORGANISES HER HOME DEFENCES

It is impossible in this volume to trace even in outline the Government's home policy. No extracts are included which concern finance or trade or industrial relations or labour organisation. It has been found necessary also for reasons of space to exclude the discussion on 22 May of the Treachery Bill which provides that the death penalty may be exacted in grave cases of espionage and sabotage. Similarly the discussion on 16, 23 and 24 July and 1 August of the proposal to set up special courts to deal speedily with offences of military importance in invasion areas have had to be omitted. In these long and often difficult debates the House tenaciously refused to accept the Government's proposals until it was satisfied that concessions would be made which would safeguard the civil population from undue loss of liberty. The same concern for the maintenance of the rights of democratic citizenship inspired the discussion on 31 July of limitations of the freedom of the Press.

From time to time concern was expressed at the frequency of secret sessions and the House showed its traditional awareness of democratic principle on such occasions as that of 23 October, when the prolongation of the life of Parliament without further reference to the electorate was discussed.

The subject matter of this chapter then, is mainly the military and other means of preparing and organising the defences of Britain against invasion.

22 May, 1940

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (MR ATTLEE) I have to inform the House that the present situation is so critical that the Government are compelled to seek special powers from the House by a Bill to be passed through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament to day. The Government are convinced that now is the time when we must mobilise to the full the whole resources of this country. We must throw all our weight into the struggle. Every private interest must give way to the urgent needs of the community. We cannot know what the next few weeks or even days may bring forth but whatever may come we shall meet it as the British people in the past have met dangers and overcome them.

But it is necessary that the Government should be given complete control over persons and property, not just some persons of some particular class of the community, but of all persons, rich and poor, employer and workman, man or woman, and all property. It is these powers for which I am asking the House this afternoon. I do not ask for them in any spirit of panic, there is no need for panic. I am asking that in this emergency we should be given the requisite powers that may be needed. In order to pass the Bill through all its stages, it is necessary to move this procedure

Motion without notice, and I am asking the House to acquiesce in this procedure in view of the great peril in which the nation stands to-day. The Motion is in precisely the same form as that moved on 24 August last year when the original Emergency Powers (Defence) Bill was passed through all its stages. The Bill is available for hon. Members in the Vote Office now.

Let me explain shortly what the Bill does. The operative part of the Bill is an extension of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, and in Clause 1 the powers conferred by that Act are to "include power by Order in-Council to make such Defence Regulations making provision for requiring persons to place themselves, their services, and their property at the disposal of His Majesty, as appear to him to be necessary or expedient for securing the public safety, the defence of the Realm, the maintenance of public order, or the efficient prosecution of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged, or for maintaining supplies or services essential to the life of the community."

Subsection (2) gives power to amend the legislation passed

say that I do not want anyone to jump to the conclusion of a sudden everybody is going to be ordered to do something different from what he is doing now. The essential thing in an emergency is that everybody should continue at his job until he is ordered to do otherwise, but what is proposed is that there

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somebody else is asked to do a particular job. If he is asked to do his professional work, he is asked to do his professional work. If he is asked to do manual work, he is asked to do manual work. The general principle will be that of remuneration for the job.

With regard to conditions and pay, it is proposed that, wherever they exist, industrial agreements should be maintained.

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one district to another, there should be payment to deal with things of that kind. There is power to inspect premises and to require employers to produce their books. The object is to mobilise the effective resources of the nation for whatever tasks may come upon us now. I said at the beginning that it was essential that this should be done, but not because people are unwilling. I am convinced that the bulk of the work will be done with the good will of all and with the co-operation of organised labour.

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ment control. The Excess Profits Tax will be at the rate of 100 per cent. There will be no profit out of the national emergency. Other establishments may be ordered to carry on and they may perhaps be ordered to carry on at a loss, but there must be power to carry on essential services and if people are put in a position where they are making a loss, they must have adequate remuneration in order to do their job effectively. The essential thing is that over a wide field—how wide one cannot say at the moment—industry will be carried on for the community in fact, and not for private profit. There may be cases in which firms will have to close down and there may be destruction of property here and there. One cannot tell what will happen. There will be difficult questions of compensation. There will have to be full reconsideration of compensation but in an emergency, these things cannot be worked out precisely and meanwhile, there will have to be interim compensation.

I have spoken of businesses, but it is not only industrial businesses in the ordinary sense that will be, or may be, under control. It depends on what the Regulations will be. There will have to be control of the finance of the country and the banks. It may be done, centrally, it may be, if conditions require it, that it will have to be done through regional commissioners and financial advisers, but at the moment I cannot give more than an indication of the kind of action which may have to be taken. The point arises. Under whose orders are these things to be done? They are to be done under the orders of the Government. The order will be given by the competent authority and the competent authority in each case will be the Minister concerned with that particular national activity—the Minister of Labour, for instance, dealing with labour matters, and the Minister of Agriculture with agricultural matters. If conditions enforce it, control will have to be exercised through the regional commissioners, but, broadly speaking, we are taking control in a time of emergency, so that in the national interest we may utilise all our resources for the common weal.

Now let me take one part of the scheme which has already been worked out in detail. It is essential in this crisis that we should produce to the full all our essential munitions, and the

Minister of Labour has been given the responsibility of supplying the labour required for the programmes of the various Departments. He proposes to set up at once a Production Council consisting of representatives of the chief Government Departments concerned with munition supplies—the Admiralty, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Mines. That Production Council will be presided over by the Minister without Portfolio my right hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mr. Greenwood). It is proposed to set up a Director of Labour Supply with full-time assistants, drawn from trade unions and employers. There will be local organisations based on area boards.

MR J J DAVIDSON (Maryhill) Will there be no Office of Works in it?

MR ATTLEE No, but there will be full control of building

supply committees will be set up to organise local self-help for meeting difficulties in the labour supply. It is proposed that firms should be grouped to secure the best utilisation of labour and to prevent waste. In certain instances there will be compulsory notification through the Employment Exchanges of all men who are "stood off" or on short time. Those firms engaged in munitions will be brought under control and will become controlled establishments. My right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour proposes to set on foot a bold and comprehensive scheme of training. Training facilities are available under the Ministry of Labour and in the technical schools and so forth. It is proposed,

operation with trade unions and employers organisations. It may be that cases will arise in which, under this stress, agreements will be made to set aside, for the time being, customs in industry that have previously been agreed between employers and employees. It is essential that everybody who is engaged in this great effort should be satisfied that the rights which he has had shall remain alive and in being and it is proposed, therefore, that there should be an addition to the Fair Wages Clause whereby employers who do not at the end of this war restore any customs or conditions which have been set aside for the war, will be ineligible to come on the list of Government contractors. [HON MEMBERS

"Permanently?"] Certainly until they comply but I will deal with that point later. I cannot now give more than a broad outline. I have tried to give the House a picture of an immediate piece of work. To show how immediate it is, I may say that it is proposed that the Munitions Board should meet to-night to get on with the job.

I have only been able to indicate some lines on which action will be taken. What other action will be taken must depend on how events move, but I cannot end without again stressing what I am quite sure is in the mind of everybody. At this time everything for which we stand is in jeopardy—our political rights, our rights of conscience, our industrial rights—and everything will go if we do not defeat the enemy. I do not believe it is necessary to make a long appeal to the people of our country. I am quite certain that everybody knows what is at stake, and that while these powers are necessary the real force behind us to-day is the will and determination of a free people.

MR. MACLAREN (Burslem). We have heard about labour, wages, trade union agreements and all the rest of it, but the most essential of all things, the thing which is in question and jeopardy, is the land, and that has not been mentioned. I want to know if we are taking powers for the entire control of the land of this country?

MR. ATTLEE. The hon. Member is, of course, right in stressing the importance of the land. I say "all property, real and personal," and land is an essential part of property. . .

MR. LEES-SMITH. One cannot help recognising in the speech of the Lord Privy Seal that he has in mind certain contingencies and broadly speaking he wishes to ensure that this country shall not be taken by surprise like some countries already have been. I would, therefore, say that apart from the discussions upon the Orders if hon. Members find that in the working of this Bill there are points which ought to be raised I am glad to know that the ordinary procedure of this House will protect us. We shall have Ministers in front of us from day to day with whom we can raise particular points. One of the great advantages of our procedure is that we can with confidence give Ministers powers, especially if we have confidence in them, and we should give these powers, because our procedure enables us to raise the issue of how they are being utilised any day when the House is sitting.

MR. MAXTON. I agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Keighley (Mr. Lees-Smith) that everything which matters . . .
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powers

outlined by the Lord Privy Seal could have been done under that legislation. I notice that the Lord Privy Seal shakes his head, and I accept his greater knowledge on the subject. He only made a short general statement on which one can say nothing. I do not object to land being nationalised and banks being nationalised, and I do not object to property of all descriptions being taken over for the service of the State. I could have wished, however, that it could have been in rather calmer days and adopted more deliberately than to day.

As I listened to the Lord Privy Seal I noted that he was very precise about what was to be done in the seizure of labour. He was very definite about that—how they were to be moved anywhere at any time—but he was very vague and general about what was going to be done to property. My hostility to this Bill in principle is as strong as it was previously, but it is only when we see the regulations that we shall know just whether the inroads that are being made into established liberties are necessary, or whether the general circumstances of a time in which people tend to get nervy are being utilised to take away liberties which it is not necessary, even in these days to take away. As I say, I will not oppose the Measure, but I will scrutinise the regulations very closely when they come before the House.

MR GRAHAM WHITE (Birkenhead East) I hope I never trespass unduly on the time and patience of the House and what I feel moved to say now I can say in a sentence or two. I believe that the introduction of this Bill and the statement made by the Lord Privy Seal will be received with a feeling of great relief by vast multitudes of the people of this country, whose abiding anxiety in recent weeks has been as to how, through their property or their services, they could make their full contribution towards the conduct of the war.

SIR HERBERT WILLIAMS (Croydon, South) I think there is complete unanimity that when the Government ask for further powers the House will cheerfully grant them, but we want to have some assurance that those powers will always be wisely exercised. The fact that there is a war on is no reason for doing anything foolish, and there are many people at this moment who, without full thought, will sometimes take advantage of the great powers which are rightly conferred upon them to do things which in fact, are contrary to the interests of the State. I think it is of the greatest importance that when the regulations are drawn the instructions to those who will exercise the practical duties of the competent authority are of such a character that mistakes of the kind with which I am familiar, and many other Members also to a great extent are familiar, shall be repeated to the smallest possible degree.

MR GALLACHER (Fife, West) I want to take exception to this Bill. I do not see how it is possible to suggest that by taking away the liberties of the people of this country you are helping to forward any cause of liberty. The working class of this country has had to say whatever in the policy that has led to the critical and desperate situation in which we find ourselves. The ruling class of this country is responsible for what this country is facing and now seeks to save itself at the expense of the mass of the people. This Bill does not represent, as an hon. Member opposite said, "an effort to conquer ourselves", it

is interference here and there with the rights of property, and there may be certain control of organisations for the time being, but the Bill does not allow, and there will be no intention of allowing, for doing away with the rights of private property.

MR KIRKWOOD (Dumbarton Burghs) When the Lord Privy Seal was making his statement I asked how much the Bill would affect private property. I waited patiently to see whether private property and the banking interests were to be affected to the same extent as the working class, and as far as I was able to gauge the situation there is a distinct difference. The working class as I understood the Lord Privy Seal are to be tied hand and foot, and private property is not. Unless the workers are to be treated under this Bill on an equal footing with the great, the rich and the all powerful, I shall do all I can to get my class to resist. Hon. Members should not run away with the idea that because certain Labour and trade union leaders have gone over to the Government side of the House the working class movement is dead. It is no use the Lord Privy Seal and his partners thinking that the working-class movement are just going to fall under the provisions of this Bill without protest, unless all interests are treated alike.

MISS RATHBONE (Combined English Universities) The Lord Privy Seal stated the intention of the Government in respect to wage agreements and so forth. Does he mean that the existing wage rates, trade agreements and industrial agreements will be frozen as they are now, or that the existing machinery for regulating wage rates and so forth will continue? If this Bill with its exceptional and dangerous powers, which we recognise as necessary, has to go on for some time, there may be such changes in the financial position of the country that a modification of industrial arrangements and scales both up and down may be necessary. Women are coming in as substitutes for men in the engineering trade. If vast numbers of women have to be employed and the Government pledge themselves to pay the rates recognised for men as the rate for the job, that may be right or wrong, but it

is a big undertaking to which to commit ourselves without any discussion. May we therefore have a little more explanation of the industrial side of this Measure?

MR TINKER (Leigh) The Lord Privy Seal mentioned that each Minister would issue Orders as he felt them to be necessary. I take it, however, that they will be issued only on a decision by the Cabinet and that it will not be left to each Minister to take it upon himself to issue them. If it is necessary to nationalise the mines or take over the land for the welfare of the State and the prosecution of the war, I take it that there will be no hesitation in putting full powers into operation.

MR MAINWARING (Rhondda, East) Did I understand the Lord Privy Seal to say that the Minister of Labour, with his additional powers for increasing the mobilisation of labour generally, will seek powers to restore a factory which was in operation before the war but at which work has been suspended since the outbreak of the war? We still have large numbers of unemployed, and some of them may be residing in places where there is no present or future hope of employment. It may be necessary to transfer them to places some distance from their present homes. Is the Minister of Labour going to restore the power to assist the workers and their families to move to the new place of employment, because that is a power which has been suspended since the outbreak of the war?

MR RICHARD ACLAND (Barnstaple) I should like to make a suggestion on behalf of a small number of people who are in positions roughly corresponding to my own. I am rather looking forward to the day when something of this kind will happen to me. I am sure that as his representative will come to my some it may

America to buy aeroplanes. When I ask what compensation is to be given for those pictures, I am looking forward to receiving the two answers, "The means test and Keynes' Plan. Let us see how much you have to live upon after we have taken these pictures, and as to the rest let there be deferred compensation." I make this suggestion to the Lord Privy Seal because, I

the Gangway. That is the kind of thing, only on a very small scale, which I mean by conscription of wealth, and unless the Government are prepared to act in that way we shall run into trouble.

MR ATTLEE By leave of the House, I will reply to some of the questions which have been addressed to me. With regard to the questions as to the control of property, I do not think the hon. Member who put them can really have listened to what I said. The power taken to control property is just as strenuous as that to control persons. The hon. Member for Dumharton Burghs (Mr. Kirkwood) stressed very rightly the position of labour. Labour has declared its view that this war must be won, and I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. Member himself will do his full part. He knows as well as I do that we can get the highest effort from this country only if the trade unions play their full part and undertake their responsibilities, and that is exactly what is being done under the scheme of the Ministry of Labour, as I indicated.

MR. KIRKWOOD I have a question to put on that point. This is a very serious matter. It may be that some hon. Members do not know just how serious it is, but I do. I want to be perfectly clear about this, because it will be put to me immediately by the engineers. Are we to understand, seeing that labour is to be conscripted—because that is how it appears to me—that wealth in this country is to be conscripted also? I want the Minister to give me a straight answer, such as I am in the habit of giving.

MR. ATTLEE My short answer is that we are taking power to deal with all persons and all property.

MR. KIRKWOOD But can I not get a straighter answer than that? I want a straight answer if the Minister can give it. Believe me, it is with the best intentions that I put this point. It is perfectly true that the leaders of the trade union movement, and all that are on the opposite benches, but I am dealing with the men, and it is the men we have to get. Am I in a position to say that if labour is conscripted, so will wealth be conscripted? Can the Minister say that, speaking for the Government?

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON (Kensington, South) I can give an answer to the hon. Member. I have received an intimation from my bank that certain property which I have in America has been taken by the Government and that certain payments will be made in due course. If that is not conscription of wealth—

MR. GALLACHER They should take the whole lot and give you nothing.

MR. KIRKWOOD I do not want another Member's reply.

MR. ATTLEE I have said that we are taking power over all persons and all property. That does not mean to say that from

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 was desired
 they should
 be compensated As in the suggestion made by the hon Member
 for Barnstaple (Sir R. Acland), there is power to take his Josbua
 Reynolds, if we thought it in the national interest to do so. If
 he has one and wants that done, I am sure the Government will
 be glad of it.

MR GARRO JONES Will the right hon Gentleman be
 good enough to answer the point about penalties?

MR ATTLEE It is true that there are to be penalties. It
 will be the endeavour to make the penalties apply proportionately
 to everybody—I could not say exactly how, but the idea is that
 there should be no distinction between people at this time.
 Whether they be rich or poor, or whatever they are, they should
 all be willing to perform service and to give up their property,
 and those who are recalcitrant come into the same category.

LOCAL DEFENCE VOLUNTEERS

22 May, 1940

SIR E GRIGG I understand that it would be agreeable to
 the House if I made some statement about the organisation of the
 Local Defence Volunteers. The decision to raise this Force
 was taken on 12 May. My right hon Friend made his broad-
 cast on 14 May. By 20 May over 250,000 volunteers had come
 forward, and in many districts units had been formed and rifles
 and ammunition already issued. The process has been going
 on steadily since 20 May, and the number is now much greater
 than 250,000. In a very few days the process will, I hope, be
 complete. The House will feel that we owe a great debt of
 gratitude to the organisers who have undertaken this work and
 also to the patriotism of the volunteers who have come forward.
 It is a remarkable sign of the readiness of this country to come
 forward when it is called upon. We have called upon a hitherto
 untapped source of defence, and this experience shows what
 reserves of patriotism we possess.

The Local Defence Volunteer organisation is based upon the
 military organisation and is organised by areas like the military
 commands. Each area has been sub-divided into zones, and
 each zone is sub-divided into groups, the groups into companies,
 and the companies into platoons and sections. There is a regular
 chain of command the whole way down from the area to the
 section. At the head of each zone group are voluntary organisers,
 and they and the officers chosen to raise the sections are, like the
 volunteers themselves, unpaid. The whole thing is voluntary.

Military area commanders after consultation with the lord-lieutenants of counties for whose co-operation we are grateful, and also with the chairmen of county councils and other local authorities of that kind have appointed voluntary area organisers, who in turn have appointed the zone organisers and so on down the chain. I repeat that all members of the force, organisers, commanders and volunteers are unpaid. It is an entirely voluntary service. There is however, some need to meet out-of-pocket expenses which we cannot expect the individual in all cases to bear and arrangements have been made to meet those expenses in the following way. Free petrol or third class railway fares are to be allowed for official journeys by area, zone and group organisers. Office expenditure is also allowed for up to £10—for postage, stationery, telephones and so on. It is £10 for each unit.

There will also be an allowance of a half crown per rifle for group organisers. With regard to compensation for disabilities incurred in the service, volunteers will get it on the same scale as for private soldiers. Uniform will consist of linen overalls and field service caps or civilian clothes with khaki arm bands stitched to the sleeve having the letters L D V stencilled on.

that so far as dress is concerned the Local Defence Volunteers will be fully equipped immediately.

The Commander in Chief of the Home Forces is responsible for the operational control of the volunteers throughout functions of the volunteers.

ticular in two ways. In the dispersal of first line troops in small packets. The first duty of the Army is to keep its divisions intact for service here or overseas as may be required and they cannot be kept intact if men are dispersed for guard duties all over the country. The second duty of the Army is to press on with the training and the equipment of new troops and training or advanced training at any rate becomes impossible if formations are broken up for various purposes of local defence.

They have another function to perform. They are wanted to deal with small enemy parties landed from the air. We have seen what the effect of the landing of small groups by parachute or aircraft has been in other countries and it is important to organise means of local action against the measures which these small parties landed in various places may take. The three main purposes for which the Local Defence Volunteers are wanted are these. First observation and information. We want the earliest possible information either from observation posts or from patrols, as to landings. The second purpose is to help, in the very earliest

stages, in preventing movement by these enemy parties landed from the air by blocking roads, by denying them access to means of movement, motors and so on, and by seeing that they are hemmed in as completely as possible from the moment they land. Their third purpose is to assist in patrolling and protecting vulnerable spots, of which there is a great number everywhere, particularly in certain parts of the country where the demands for local guard duties are really greater than the present forces can meet.

In regard to the method of operation, I am sure the House understands that the Local Defence Volunteers will be soldiers under military command and that they are not free to move about the country as they please as individuals. They will naturally, therefore, act in all sections under their commander, unless they are detailed singly, in pairs or in small parties, for individual acts, of any kind. All soldiers know that the great danger to one's own troops arises from inadequately co-ordinated action in twilight or in darkness. The danger hours in this country in regard to air invasion are dusk at sunset and dusk at dawn. We do not want to run the unnecessary risk of a patrol of Local Defence Volunteers making mistakes and causing confusion which even the best-trained troops sometimes cause when they are acting in the dark or in the dusk.

It is, therefore, generally understood that these Defence Volunteers will be acting in sections under command, and that it is not desirable that they should act in any way as individuals roving at large. It is well that this point should be made clear. I am sure that many members remember incidents in the last war of the kind which arose when armed parties without clear instructions wandered about in a fading light. . . .

I will come to the question of arms now. As to the supply of rifles, there are plenty of rifles in the country, but it is not desirable for more reasons than one to issue rifles promiscuously to all members of the Volunteers unless special reasons exist. The question of whether they are to be issued to individuals or kept in one centre is a matter of local discretion with which we do not wish to interfere. It will depend upon the circumstances of the case. Broadly speaking, we do not want a too great dispersal of these arms. Normally the Volunteers will be operating in sections and there must be places where the arms and ammunition are served out. While I lay down that as a general principle, in certain places it may be necessary to issue arms to individuals or to people living at a distance.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD In factories, for instance?

MR E. GRIGG - Obviously there will be a central armoury and there is no difficulty there. The difficulty arises in the more lonely places. That is why I think it is essential to leave the

discretion to local commanders in this country. While that discretion remains it is important to lay down the principle that arms are not to be more widely dispersed than the circumstances necessitate. I come now to the question of training of the actual duties which this organisation is to perform.

With regard to training, it will be entirely under a general officer commanding the whole force and the area commanders concerned. The central defence organisation is to be under a military commander in each case. I have been asked a question about motor cars because many people are anxious to act as volunteers as despatch riders or road volunteers or to help to move people from place to place. Those efforts are greatly appreciated. The answer is that they should at once get into touch with the local area command. Any officer is prepared to assist anybody who is prepared to help. The question of patrol still remains, the use of motor vehicles on a large scale. That patrol question can easily be solved. I have been questioned about shot guns, whether they will be needed and, if so, what would be the kind of ammunition. They can be used provided that they are used with soft nosed bullets. Shot guns are lethal weapons.

MR PRICE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean) What about sporting rifles?

SIR EDWARD CAMPBELL (Bromley) Will there be plenty of opportunity for practising?

SIR E GRIGG Training as I have said, is in the hands of the local command, and I do not think I can go beyond that. There may be more opportunities in some places and less in others but I hope that the opportunities for training will be adequate.

MR LAWSON (Chester le Street) There is one point I should like to raise. It is a well known fact that the Regular soldier does not look too kindly upon the Territorial. The Territorial suffers in that respect. [Interruption] There is no doubt about that, even to day. I mention that because I do not want this new volunteer body to be a kind of lost battalion. We want it to be not only respected by the citizens, but held in such respect by the rest of the Forces that there is perfect co operation and liaison between their leaders. Otherwise, it will be very difficult for these men to do their job properly.

SIR E GRIGG I am glad the hon. Member has raised that point, because it enables me to say at once, on behalf of the Regular Army, that the co operation of these volunteers will be welcomed wholeheartedly.

MR LAWSON I am much obliged for that statement. I made my statement deliberately. I know that the liaison at the top between the Defence Forces is perfect but coming down the scale, that co-operation and liaison are not so good as they might be. I was afraid that this new body might not have its proper place. Yesterday the Secretary of State for War said that no establishment had been fixed and that the numbers accepted would depend upon circumstances in each area. Does that mean that there is to be a covering of the whole country where it is really necessary? For instance lonely moors are the kind of place where parachutists may land. Even in some great industrial areas there are populations scattered widely over fells and moors. Are there to be sufficient men enlisted to cover the country thoroughly, or is enlistment to be only in a limited way? I ask that because something has come to my knowledge which gives me the impression that the volunteers are to be taken and used only in hundreds, when they ought to be used in thousands.

This parachute business is a new thing which has come upon us, and we really have been slow to scent the danger. I hope that we are not going to be slow in dealing with it and that we shall so organise this new Force as to be sure that they will deal adequately with the danger. The Under Secretary has dealt with the question of training and arming though I was not sure about the arming. Nobody wants to scatter arms about haphazard,

but we do not want that to be made any excuse for delaying arming the Force in a proper way. I was glad to hear the Under-Secretary state that they were getting to work with the training right away. The policy of taking ex-servicemen, who would not in many cases be taken out of the Force later on but would be permanent members of it, should be made the basis for the acceptance of volunteers. It is good to hear that there are volunteers of seventeen years of age as well as of sixty years of age. I understand that some members of A R P, the Auxiliary Fire Service and of the heavy squads and the light squads formed for Civil Defence have been accepted and some have not. I do not think that there is a settled policy about that matter.

SIR E. GRIGG: It is entirely in the hands of the A.R.P. authorities as to whom they are prepared to release. The instruction was clear on that point, it was not to recruit A R P personnel unless their own authorities were prepared to release them.

MR. LAWSON: An attack by parachutists might be the preliminary of an attack from the air, or the two might take place simultaneously, and in the latter case A R P and Auxiliary Fire Service men might be much needed. But, on the other hand, there are volunteer A R P and Auxiliary Fire Service men who are also ex-servicemen, and the policy of accepting ex-servicemen, so long as they are not full-time A R P wardens or something of that kind, is a policy which is entirely in the hands of authorities. This is a volunteer Force, and it is entirely in the hands of authorities as to whom they are prepared to release. The instruction was clear on that point, it was not to recruit A R P personnel unless their own authorities were prepared to release them.

SIR P. HARRIS (Bethnal Green, S W): I hope that this organisation will not be limited to particular areas. Every encouragement should be given to every village and town to have a unit of this Force. In the last war we found that some of the most efficient units were in the country side, where there were few counter-attractions, and where old soldiers and officers were willing to give their time to the training of these men. We also found that a great many men were exempt from military service because of their essential occupations, just as they are at the present time. These men were not only able but willing and anxious to do some service in the defence of their country. In our regulations they had to sign a form stating that they were not using this service in order to exempt them from their obligations to the Army, and I assume that my hon. Friend is making a similar provision. . . .

MR. HORE-BELISHA (Devonport): . . . My criticism—if it be criticism—of this Force is that it is neither one thing nor the other. It is neither a Regular Force nor an amateur Force. If,

we have to meet the contingency of an invasion, it will be a serious matter, and those who have to face the incoming troops, whether they be directly landed or landed by parachute, should be part of the proper military organisation of the country. Before the war we found it necessary to introduce the compulsory system. We did not do so because we preferred that system, for sentimentally we were attached to the voluntary system, and we know that our people were ready to present themselves. It was efficiency that caused us to depart from the voluntary system, because we wished to have full time soldiers prepared to meet the strongest foe that this country has ever had to face.

If we have made errors in the past, they have been errors of inadequate preparation. We have waited until a calamity came upon us before realising its full magnitude. When Norway was invaded we completely under-estimated the situation. We sent a small number of troops to meet a large number of troops. Hitler dispatched to that country a far greater army than was necessary to achieve his purpose. He sent 100,000 men or more. But our conception was that we could discharge the task, if we could discharge it at all, with about 4,000 men. That was an underestimate. Then we heard that Hitler was landing troops by parachute, and everywhere we read, "This new device, this stunt, is a complete failure." But it was not a failure, and a small detachment at Narvik is still holding out against superior British forces, and presumably being nourished to some extent by parachute.

When the invasion of Holland occurred, we saw how serious was this new menace. I am not saying this, I beg my hon. Friend to believe, by way of criticism. I am only trying to be constructive before the event. Hitler is a man who never undertakes an operation unless he has adequately and completely prepared for it. The surprise is caused to those who have not had the imagination to see that he will do the thing, if he does it at all, upon a full and complete scale. If this country is to be invaded, for the first time since 1066, it will be invaded by troops who, however small in number, will be specially selected and trained for the task which they have to do. The troops of this Force are not specially selected and trained, they are volunteers who are going to give some spare time to this job, who are not organised—

SIR E. GRIGG *rose*—

MR. HORE-BELISHA - I do not wish to over-state the case, but I am presenting a serious argument. Hitler's troops will be heavily armed with machine guns, sub machine guns and grenades, and the people who are to have the first contact with them are these volunteers who are to have the partial use of a rifle, or in some cases the whole use of a rifle. I say that that is not fair. It is not fair to those men, and it is not fair to this country. Time

is of the essence of the whole matter. If there is any delay in dealing with these forces, they concentrate, they destroy bridges, they destroy electric plant, they disorganise telephonic communications. Those who are to have the first contact with them should be the best troops we can in the circumstances provide. This is by no manner of means a sideshow. The very best trained troops we have are worthy to be employed, and the commander of this Force should be, as I understand he will be, the General Officer Commanding in Chief the Home Forces. I have no doubt, because he is a very competent general, that he is—

SIR E. GRIGG. I think you must make
he say
partially trained forces here. That is not the case. He knows

MR. HORE-BELISHA. I very much resent that. I think that those remarks by the hon. Gentleman would look very foolish if the worse contingency should befall. I am trying to be helpful while there is yet time. It cannot be denied that we have, hitherto, under-estimated the strength of Hitler. It cannot be denied that Hitler prepares on the most adequate scale for what he undertakes. Nor can it be denied that we have to meet the possibility of invasion by these troops whether they land directly or by parachute, and the case which I am putting to the Government is that the whole forces to be arrayed against them should be Regular Forces.

SIR E. GRIGG. They are

MR. HORE-BELISHA. Then the whole case for this Force falls to the ground.

SIR E. GRIGG. No.

MR. HORE-BELISHA. This is a new Force destined to

SIR E. GRIGG. I do not like to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman again, but I want to be clear about what he is proposing, because, as he says, this is a very important matter. Is

he suggesting that highly trained troops should be dispersed all over the country, to be available wherever parachutists land? That appears to be the burden of his argument

MR HORE-BELISHA I certainly say that I say that our troops should be so located and should be so re-located at this moment, to meet, as far as humanly possible, a very pressing and new danger I certainly suggest that the Regular troops should be prepared for this new contingency and that all training units should be so sited that they can render the greatest possible assistance Of course, even with your new Force you cannot cover every inch of the ground, but under proper battalion organisation you can cover as much as is humanly possible I then say—I had reached this point when I was interrupted—that these men who land, if they land at all, will be armed with machine guns, sub machine guns, and grenades or incendiary bombs, that our men should be similarly armed; that the machine guns should be employed, and that these persons, whoever they may be, who have to meet the danger, should be trained in those forms of arms I do not deal now with the question of demolition, but clearly, these people may have to do demolition work and should be provided with the proper instruments with which to do it

SIR P HARRIS Are there not hundreds of thousands of men working in factories who cannot be spared for full time military service, and is it not useful to train them throughout the country so that they will be ready to assist the more fully trained forces?

MR. HORE BELISHA I do not regard this matter as a side show I regard it as a primary military duty, and the first and most pressing of our military duties One naturally welcomes the co-operation of all citizens, and one cannot praise it too highly It was a splendid response to have 250,000 volunteers That

adequate It seems an embarrassment that at this time when the danger is almost upon us we should have to institute an entirely new system I am perfectly convinced that you are not going to beat Hitler by half measures . . .

SIR A SOUTHBY: . . . If this Force is to be of any use, it must not only be adequately organised but adequately equipped I agree with the right hon Gentleman that it is not the least good asking men armed with shot guns to compete with men armed with the latest automatic weapons Parachute troops come

down with hand grenades sub machine guns pistols rifles and even flame throwers These volunteers if they are to be of any use must deal with the first attack of parachutists before the Regular troops who will ultimately deal with the attack come up It is idle to suggest that they will be adequately equipped if they have shot guns and it is stupid to suggest that they should be armed with a variety of sporting rifles These volunteers must be armed with the best arms they can be given They will need automatic sub machine guns, grenades and rifles.

* I rather deprecate the fact that no immediate use was made of the organised ex service men who could have been provided by the British Legion It would have had one great advantage In the Legion everybody knows his next door neighbour and it is essential that nobody should get into the Force who cannot be guaranteed At present any man may enrol Let us be careful that nobody is enrolled about whom we are not quite certain

I have had representations made to me that some of the men who are volunteering are in doubt whether they will be used locally or transferred to other parts of the country The man with local knowledge of his own area will be worth a great deal if an attack takes place It will be either at dusk or at dawn and it is essential that the men should know their way about

MR MCGOVERN (Glasgow Shettleston) Suppose—which God forbid—50 000 German troops were to land in an area by parachute will you collect all these volunteers by whistle from the factories workshops and mnaes? Surely you must have some permanent Force

SIR A SOUTHBY I quite agree with the hon Member I do not think men in the factories should do anything in this Force except guard their own factories It is essential that men in factories working machines should get adequate rest They cannot be used for night patrols all over the country Every man should have his rifle and ammunition in his own charge so that when the emergency takes place he can go out immediately

Further provision for transport must be made By all means have volunteer transport if that is the best that can be done but it must be organised Many of the men ought to be given motor bicycles or even ordinary bicycles Then there will be casualties What provision is being made for first aid for this Force? There must be some form of medical assistance I do not believe that, in the main men in reserved occupations should join this Force Their duty lies where their skilled work is essentially needed Nor do I think it is really a good thing to bring in young men of seventeen

I hope nothing will be done to belittle either the usefulness or efficiency of the Force If the men are to be equipped only with a shotgun an armlet and a forage cap and are simply to walk out on a kind of patrol we had better not organise the Force

at all. The men are keen to carry out what is a public duty and indeed, a vital necessity at the present time. We have already wasted one priceless week. The men must be armed immediately. An attack may come to night or to-morrow morning, and if it is to be repelled, it must be repelled the moment it comes and held until the special troops to which the right hon. Gentleman referred can be called up. I hope the Force will not be stultified by being treated as a kind of poor relation of the Army. It ought to be an adequate Force carrying out a specialist duty, and it must be encouraged and armed in the best possible way. . . .

COLONEL WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I think the gallant commander who has just spoken was mistaken about the real origin of this Force. I do not believe that the War Office originally formed this Force in order to resist invasion. I believe it was formed because the demand of the people in the country was overwhelming—the demand to be allowed to have some part, some weapons and some chance, in order to stand up to these devils when they come. I am confident that the War Office spoke through the mouth of the right hon. Gentleman below the Gangway. The War Office does think that invasion should be met by Regular troops. Everyone would agree with them—if we had enough Regular troops. The whole genius of this movement is that it provides an additional force which could not be got at in any other way. It calls in all the people, who are desperately anxious and who are demanding to have some share in the defence of their country.

The real thing is that we have got the gift of a new Force inspired by the highest patriotism. The thing to emphasise is that these people are doing it for nothing except for love of country, and they are therefore singularly well suited to meet the particular form of attack that is facing us at the present time. . . .

This may not be a Force trained in modern arms, but it is a body of extremely experienced people. In regard to the young people of seventeen, probably the hon. and gallant Gentleman has read "On Commando," the book published by Denys Reitz, the boy who went through the war at sixteen. You cannot say that he was not a very brave man. These very young and very old people—the old people have not much to live for, anyway—are extremely useful and they are getting what they want. They want only to be used.

In the first place, having got this body under the War Office, the most important thing is that they should be gradually absorbed into all the other unpaid or semi-paid services. I believe that the Observer Corps is under the Air Ministry, while A.R.P. is under the Home Office, and the War Reserves are under somewhere else. If this war goes on for a long time it will be well to absorb all these services of civil and military defence, which you cannot have separated perpetually as they are at the present time. They must all come under the Commander-in-Chief of

the Home Defence, with the possible exception of first-aid ambulances and transport. The question solves itself if you combine all these Forces.

Hon. Members are aware that there are in this country a great many women who shoot extraordinarily well, many of them are match-rifle specialists. I do not know why they should be ruled out on account of sex, and why this new Force should not have its counterpart in a women's movement, just as in the case of the Army, Navy and Air Force. So far as arms are concerned, we all put machine guns before rifles and automatic pistols, but until the people have got them they should be allowed to use anything they have. I hope that the Under-Secretary will stand up to the War Office on this question of magazines. All along it has been the aim of the War Office to keep the weapons and magazines, ~~detain back from the armed idea that the~~ working-classes should
' may start a revolution
that eighteenth-century
selves, and we cannot

defend ourselves if first of all we have to go to the police for our arms—

SIR E. GRIGG. May I interrupt the right hon. and gallant Gentleman? That is not what I said. I said that these detachment sections must be under a commander, and they have to come to a rendezvous. The easiest way of making certain that they have their rifles and ammunition is to serve them out at the rendezvous.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD. That is exactly the arrangement I do not like. The arrangement of keeping all the rifles at the rendezvous means that the ordinary man is not armed except during the two hours at dusk and dawn, at other times he has not got this protection which he requires. I raised the matter on the question of factories. When factories were considered, the Under-Secretary said that would obviously be one of the places where rifles would be stored. The danger is not of isolated parachutists dropping in the country. The real danger is that Hitler might drop 5,000 parachutists round, say, Ipswich. Within 24 hours ships may come alongside the port and we should be in an extremely difficult position. Hitler would have the port as a jumping-off point for the tanks, and it is just that 24 hours which we have to guard against.

I do not see your patrol organisation meeting the case, because that invasion may come at any time of day or night, not only at dusk or dawn. In any case, you must not rely on this service to do that work. Certainly you cannot rely on it in the least unless the people have their arms by them, where they work and where they sleep. . . . When I hear from the hon. Member that the War Office rather welcomes this move because it enables the

training of the troops to continue, because sections will not be broken up, I hope that that does not mean that they are not using the troops at this moment for defence against the enemy

SIR E. GRIGG I said that if you break up divisions you immobilise them. It is most important that divisions should be ready for instant action where required, and when they are ready for instant action they can continue their training. They should not be immobilised as they would be if they were broken up.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD I agree. But if the invasion is on the coast, I assume—

SIR E. GRIGG There is training all over the country. There is no question of training being limited to any area.

COLONEL WEDGWOOD Yes, but I should be better pleased if I saw a few divisions in all the ports on the East Coast. The danger is of an invasion on the East Coast. For that, you must rely on the Regular Army, and it must be, as the right hon. Gentleman says, the best of the Regular Army. The people who meet the first shock will be those on the East Coast, and the best troops should be on the East Coast. There should be naval defence as well. The whole situation as regards the Fleet and the Army has been completely changed as a result of the revolutionary ideas of the last six weeks. Six weeks ago we did not think invasion was possible. Now we know that it is possible. There must be a complete plan for the military defence of this country. "Parashooters" are a trifling addition to the defence of this country, though we all welcome them. I believe that the area organisations are exactly what we want. As we go on each area will compete with others in equipment and ideas, and we shall get in time a very efficient Force. But this Force is not a substitute for the serious defence of this country against parachute invasion.

SIR JOSEPH LAMB (Stone) What will be the relation between this new Force and the civilian police force? If parachute troops were dropped, a state of war would exist, which would enable that Force to have all powers, but at the present time they should be given certain powers that are already possessed by the police. They ought to be given the power to stop and to inspect motor transport, and the right of interrogating pedestrians at night. If the hon. Member who is to reply can give some indication of the relation between the new Force and the police I shall be much obliged.

MR. PRICE (Lord of Dean) I do not agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Epsom (Sir A. Southby), who said that only members of the British Legion should be members of the Defence Force. I know plenty of

agricultural labourers who were in the last war and who can handle machine and Lewis guns, and they would be excluded. They are in reserved occupations, it is true, but they could give their services when they have finished their farm work, at dusk. It is necessary to work out the relationship between this new Force that we are trying to organise and the A R P and Special Constabulary. All can play an important role. We cannot expect these men to resist a large force of parachute troops armed with the latest weapons of offence, but it is quite possible for them to watch what is going on while another force is summoned. We must all assist each other, and I hope there will be proper instructions and co-ordination so that we can do so.

MR HENDERSON STEWART (Fife East) I think the nature of the Debate warrants even demands, specific assurances to the House that adequate and new measures have been, and are being taken on a most effective scale to deal with this new threatened attack.

CAPTAIN SIR IAN FRASER (Lonsdale) Many hon and right hon Members have suggested to the Under Secretary of State—and the House seems to have given them a measure of support—that each man in this new Force should be allowed to have his own rifle and to take it home with him. I beg the House most earnestly to reconsider this pressure which it appears to be putting upon the Under Secretary to take a course which at this stage, I think would be extremely undesirable.

I would put one question to the Financial Secretary to the War Office. What has happened to the "dungaree force" as it was called? Would it not be wise to revive the idea—perhaps in association with the Local Defence Volunteers—of providing machine guns for factories to be used against low flying aeroplanes?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (MR R. K. LAW) It has been an extremely interesting Debate. It has shown that the House is alive as the country is, to the danger which threatens us from this new and perhaps rather ruthless form of warfare. But it shows something more than that. It shows that we are not going to be intimidated by this new threat. We are all of us determined to take every possible step to counter it.

The hon Member for Chester le Street (Mr. Dawson) asked a question which was really, I think, more of an observation. He asked whether the establishment of this new Force would be big enough to cover the whole area of the country, or whether it would deal with just selected areas. I think that the answer must be obvious. It is the intention of the Government to see that the new Force does cover every area so far as is possible and that there shall be no gaps.

getting into the hands of some unknown persons of the Fifth Column. That is another reason why they should be kept in a central magazine, and not distributed among people who, however careful they may be, may lose track of them and allow them to get into the hands of individuals who should not have them. My hon. Friend the Member for East Fife (Mr. Henderson Stewart) asked for an assurance that other and new measures were being undertaken to deal with this menace. I can give him that assurance, but it is obvious that it would be impossible to give details of what is intended.

SIR J. LAMB Might I ask my hon. Friend for a reply as to the relations between this Force and the police force?

Mr. LAW If necessity arises these Forces will be able to help the civil authorities, such as for stopping people and making inquiries.

[On 23 July, 1940, Mr. Eden in answer to a question stated that it was proposed to submit for His Majesty's approval an Order in Council giving the Local Defence Volunteers the title "The Home Guard". Armlets would be issued with the initials "H. G."]

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

23 May, 1940

Mr. MANDER asked the Home Secretary (1) what action he proposes to take with reference to the Fascist organisation known before the war as the Imperial Fascist League, its members giving the Nazi salute and wearing the swastika badge, now replaced by the St. George's Cross, and whether he is aware that this organisation is circulating pamphlets and a weekly news sheet entitled *Weekly Angles* from the *Angles News Service*, 56, Crogsland Road, N.W. 1, occupies the same headquarters as did the Imperial Fascist League and that its activities are contrary to the national war effort,

(2) what action he proposes to take with reference to the British Council for Christian Settlement in Europe and the British People's Party, of which Lord Tavistock is chairman, to which are attached former members of the Nordic League and the Link; and whether he is aware that these bodies conduct propaganda of a defeatist and pro-Nazi character and are working contrary to the national war effort?

SIR J. ANDERSON—All these matters are receiving the attention due to them in present circumstances, but it would be contrary to the public interest to announce beforehand the steps which are being taken to deal with any persons whose activities are calculated at the present time to impede the national war effort.

MR MANDER Is the Home Secretary aware, and will he bear in mind, that the British Council for Christian Settlement in Europe has as its secretary Mr John Beckett who was associated before the war with Mr William Joyce, better known as "Lord Haw Haw"?

SIR J ANDERSON I will bear that in mind

MR NOEL-BAKER Will the right hon Gentleman take special steps to find out whether any of these organisations are receiving funds from abroad, and when he has the information will he publish the sums and the sources?

SIR J ANDERSON I have been giving close attention to that matter for some time and I shall certainly consider how I can best make available the information I have

COLONEL WEDGWOOD asked the Home Secretary what steps have yet been taken to intern pro German British or Irish subjects in Great Britain especially members of the British Union of Fascists and Irish Republican Army

SIR J ANDERSON As Regulation 18B of the Defence Regulations was last night amended by the addition of a provision enabling me to order the detention of members of organisations which have had associations with the enemy or are subject to foreign influence of control and may be used for purposes prejudicial to the national security

The debate which follows indicates the pre blitzkrieg state of civil defences against attack from the air. It should be compared with that of 9 October when actual experience especially in London, of devastation from the air had introduced a new realism

CIVIL DEFENCE

12 June, 1940

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (SIR JOHN ANDERSON) I wish to open this Debate by

In considering what I should include within the scope of my statement, I naturally turned back to the Debate which took place on 3 November, 1938 when I made my first modest contribution in my capacity as the Minister responsible for Civil Defence. On that occasion I referred to certain outstanding questions which needed to be dealt with promptly and effectively. I singled out

the subjects of evacuation, shelter policy, the development of a properly organised and equipped regional staff throughout the country, and the difficult problems that seemed likely to arise in the Metropolis by reason of the complex character of the organisation of local government in that area. I cannot deal with all those subjects this afternoon, because evacuation is to be dealt with, I understand, to-morrow by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health. I would only say on that subject that I know that my right hon. Friend will be able to demonstrate to the Committee that the general problem of the evacuation of portions of the civil population from danger areas has been worked out on a far more comprehensive basis and according to a far more flexible plan than seemed at the date of the earlier Debate to be within the region of possibility.

I would like to say just a word about the organisation of the regional staff which has been established up and down the country. Under a regional and a deputy-regional commissioner, we have in each region, closely linked together, responsible officers of all the main civil Departments concerned with every aspect of Civil Defence. We have attached to the regional commissioners an adequate technical staff capable of dealing with air-raid precautions in all their aspects, with the problems of shelter, with fire brigade organisation, and so forth. In London, where in the area covered by the London region there are 101 separate local authorities, we have been able to establish an exceptionally strong regional staff.

I am in a position to tell the Committee that for all practical purposes the issue of the necessary equipment for those services is complete, complete with reserves. Of respirators of all kinds, including children's respirators and the device known as the baby's helmet, we have issued numbers not far short of 60,000,000; of steel helmets we have issued not far short of 3,000,000; of oilskin suits, over 1,500,000; of sturup pumps we have issued a number running into six figures—these sturup pumps, as hon. Members probably know, form the most important item of equipment required for dealing with attack by incendiary bombs—and of sandbags we have issued roughly 350,000,000.

The Committee will remember that on the outbreak of war the Civil Defence services were at once fully mobilised, and the local authorities were called upon to take immediate steps to make good such deficiencies as might exist in the ranks of those services. As the war did not break upon us with the sudden and full intensity that might perhaps have been expected, there was a great deal of criticism, voiced in this House and elsewhere, of large numbers of Civil Defence workers standing about doing nothing, eating their heads off, at great cost to the State. . . . I felt that it was essential, before any sweeping reductions were made, to undertake a thorough review of the position. As the result of that review, which necessarily occupied a good many weeks, the Ministry issued to all the authorities concerned a revised

establishment of Civil Defence personnel in the various services.

That revised establishment was communicated through the regional organisations to the various local authorities concerned, and it was made the basis of a more detailed inquiry with a view to determining, in relation to the actual circumstances of each area, how far it was possible to adhere to the revised establishment that had been laid down. That process of detailed examination and investigation was completed last April, and as a result a further instruction was issued to local authorities, giving precise details of the organisation of the various services and of the strength, paid and unpaid, of Civil Defence personnel that should be aimed at. . . . The total establishment at which in those latest instructions we have fixed the strength of the personnel in the various services of air-raid precautions excluding for the moment such services as the Auxiliary Fire Service, the auxiliary police, the various casualty services, which come under the control of the Health Departments, and the services established in connection with evacuation, the total establishment, paid and unpaid, that we have thus fixed is just short of 1,000,000, and of that 1,000,000 the number of whole-time paid personnel is roughly 180,000. The net financial result of the process of review which I have just described would be to reduce the annual charge for paid personnel, which falls, I may remind the Committee, entirely upon the Exchequer, by something between £5,000,000 and £6,000,000. The authorised establishment of the fire services accounts for an additional 200,000 persons, auxiliary police for an additional 60,000, the personnel engaged in connection with health services and casualties, which I mention here in order to complete the general picture, represents over 250,000, and for the evacuation services the total numbers enrolled amount to something like 100,000.

In a number of areas we have been able to persuade employers not only to train the personnel required in accordance with the terms of the Civil Defence Act to ensure that the Civil Defence services in connection with a particular factory or works are adequately organised, but to go further and train additional personnel, at their own expense, to be available in case of need as a still further reserve to supplement the reserves available to the local authorities.

Hon. Members may be inclined to ask why I have found it necessary in the last few days to issue a new call for volunteers for the Civil Defence services. The explanation is simple. As the war proceeds, we must expect that more and more calls will be made upon the man-power of the country. We cannot hope to be able to retain all the whole-time personnel at present included in the Civil Defence services, and we want to be able to go as far as is humanly possible in the direction of replacing our whole-time personnel by adequately trained part-time personnel. . . .

We have, as hon. Members know, as a result of the Act passed

only a few days ago, certain powers in regard to the employment of men and women on tasks of vital importance to the State. It may be that so far as our whole time personnel are concerned, we shall have to make use of those powers. It might be suggested that the use of these compulsory powers ought to be extended to cover part time personnel. On that point I would say just this. Who is to judge whether a person whose primary employment is in connection for example with the production of munitions, is really in a position to give time to Civil Defence without prejudice to his primary occupation? Who is to tell, if not the man himself?

I should now like to pass to the question of shelters, and here, perhaps, there is a subject on which a certain degree of restraint, both on my part, and on the part of those who may wish to follow me in this Debate would be very desirable. I am aware of the criticisms which have been current, and I am aware that it has been said that the provision of shelter is, even at this date, after many months of war, short of our real requirements. I should like for a few moments to pause and examine these criticisms. First, I want to compare what has been done with what we set out to do. May I remind the Committee that on 21 December, 1938 I made in this House the first comprehensive statement of the Government's policy in regard to the provision of shelters. At the conclusion of the statement I said that the total number of persons for whom we proposed to make provision in the various forms of shelter I described would be nearly 20 000 000. I had a return the other day from various local authorities and employers, and it will interest the Committee to know that the total number of persons for whom shelter has, in fact, been provided happens to be, for practical purposes, 20 000 000. That is an outstanding fact which should be noted.

It is perfectly true that the figure of 20 000 000, although it was our original goal does not represent the provision of shelter for all. But we did not set out to provide shelter for all, and we made it clear that we were first of all going to discriminate between area and area, and concentrate our efforts on the provision of shelters in the most vulnerable areas. Beyond that, we made it clear that, so far as domestic shelter was concerned, we looked to those who could be fairly expected to provide shelters for themselves to do so.

It is also true that the distribution of shelter protection is not uniform, even in areas of any particular classification, but it is broadly true that the provision of shelter is best where the needs are greatest—that is, because attention has been concentrated on those special target areas. But there are gaps which need to be filled and I do not conceal the fact.

I now turn to industrial shelters. Hon. Members will recall that the Civil Defence Act laid an obligation on factory employers and owners of commercial buildings in that regard. I am very pleased indeed to be able to inform the Committee that the provision of shelter to factories is, for all practical purposes, com-

plete The same is broadly true of the provision of shelters in mines As regards commercial buildings, the returns that have been received from local authorities to whom the supervision of shelter provision in commercial buildings was entrusted, show gratifying and encouraging results

There is a further point that I would like to make in this review of the general shelter position When we were urging upon local authorities and others concerned to put every possible effort into the provision of specially constructed shelters, we advisedly did not make reference to the degree of protection which is provided by an ordinary soundly-constructed house I would like to remind the Committee that the degree of protection so provided is in fact, very substantial and if people who have not special shelters provided to their houses or close to them will carry out the advice given in a booklet which has been widely distributed, called "Your Home as an Air Raid Shelter," they will be well advised when an air raid warning is given, to stay in their houses rather than rush out into the streets and try to find their way to communal shelters

We have recently issued to local authorities a memorandum giving particulars of a method of providing really effective shelters by making use of derelict houses These instructions were issued only within the last few days, but there are already indications that some local authorities are proceeding to act on them

The financial terms provided by the Air Raid Precautions

rate of grant was to be increased by 10 per cent so that, instead of being from 65 to 75 per cent it was from 75 to 85 per cent

The figures for 18 large cities and county boroughs show that, leaving out of account the cost of certain rescue party and miscellaneous equipment supplied free by the Government, the Exchequer would be bearing on the average about 86 per cent of the total expenditure, that the rates would be bearing about 3½ per cent, and that the balance would or could be met by loan It will be apparent that the actual burden on the funds of local authorities for Civil Defence in general and for shelters in particular is relative to the other charges on local authorities, not very substantial

There has been a long controversy on the subject of deep shelter, and I felt it might be regarded as closed I have, however, seen several times in the Press of late a tendency to recur to it, and I do not think my statement would be complete if I did not deal with the question At the first instance I thought it right to keep an open mind and when I announced the Government's plan for the provision of splinter and blast proof shelter, I indicated that the possibility of further provision, of a more strongly pro-

ected type of shelter, should not be regarded as excluded. I set up a body, which came to be known as the Hailey Conference, to give special consideration to the question. While giving general support to the policy of the Government in the provision of splinter and blast proof shelter, that conference recommended that more strongly protected shelter should be provided in a limited number of special cases. That report was accepted by the Government. I want to tell the Committee frankly what has been the result of the further consideration which has been given to the matter.

In the first instance, we took up the question with the employers and representatives of the workers concerned in some of our most vital industrial undertakings. The decision reached after consideration of the matter was that to provide special strongly-protected shelters for the workers in those establishments would involve technical problems so difficult that it must be regarded as impracticable in any short space of time to provide such shelter on any substantial scale. It was found that there was a definite reluctance on the part of workers to support plans for the provision of shelters for themselves at their places of work which would be out of all scale with the shelter provided in the ordinary course for their wives and families.

I do not want to be controversial, but looking back I must say frankly that I am devoutly thankful we did not adopt a general policy of providing deep or strongly protected shelters. Had we done so, we should at this moment have been in a far worse position, looking at the problem as a whole, than we are to-day. The country would have been caught with a very limited amount of shelter in course of construction and not completed. We should have been faced with the two inevitable shortages of labour and material which have now occurred and which are affecting even the provision of splinter and blast-proof shelter. The period of warning is an important factor in considering the sort of shelter that it is best to provide. The longer the period of warning the less the objection to large and strongly protected shelters, for it would take people some time to go to them. The shorter the period of warning, the greater the danger of people leaving the comparative shelter of their homes and being caught in the streets and perhaps machine gunned while trying to find their way to communal shelter.

There is another consideration of perhaps a more subtle but not less important character. In this war we must avoid at all costs what I may call the deep-shelter mentality. There are these further considerations. Think of the menace of incendiary bombs and of the means available for dealing with them. I have spoken of the large number of stirrup pumps which have been issued to local authorities, and we are adding to that number enormously under a new plan of issuing stirrup pumps to the general public on condition that they band themselves in groups to use the stirrup pumps. They will not use the stirrup pumps

if they are in deep shelters. They would not know what had happened to their houses, which would be burning merrily in their absence. Then think of the possibility of attack by parachute troops. If that happened, would people like to be underground in deep shelters?

There has recently come into prominence an idea that, without going to the length of providing deep or heavily-protected

and blast proof type can be built which could, without great difficulty, be adapted later to afford substantially increased protection, and I have made arrangements to ensure that where local authorities provide splinter and blast proof shelters according to designs to be modified on the lines I have indicated, the Government will pay the full grant.

In conclusion, I would say that the whole problem of Civil Defence has taken a new turn as a result of the course of development of the war. We have to reckon not merely with the risk of a bombing attack, but with the new menace of invasion, of parachute attack, for which we must be prepared. It is giving no encouragement to the enemy to say that we recognise that we must be prepared for these risks. I believe that the collaboration which has got to be established all over the country between the military and the civil authorities would be almost impossible if we had not already in being the well developed regional organisation which exists to day, with its network of connections with the local and public authorities all over the country. It is absolutely vital that there should be, in these critical days, the fullest collaboration between the military authorities, on whom a heavy responsibility rests, and the civil authorities.

Mr WILFRID ROBERTS (Cumberland North) I would congratulate the Minister of Home Security on the statement which he has made

response is not too good. This refers to various branches of Civil Defence personnel. I know there have been appeals on the wireless that auxiliary firemen who may have moved from one

been trained at some expense. A man may only be a stretcher bearer, but I am told that it takes three months to train a stretcher bearer, who must have a considerable knowledge if he is to be

efficient in first-aid. He must also be a strong man to be able to do his work properly.

If men who volunteered are now drifting away, sometimes into other services, attention must be given to the matter. I know that in country districts the enthusiasm which at one time obtained for volunteering for A R P services has gone to the more fashionable "parashooter" corps or Local Defence Volunteers. That tends to deplete the services. With admirable motives, people may feel that the Local Defence Volunteer Corps is a more dangerous occupation. Industrial work is being keyed up, and, as the Minister said, in munition areas men are working for very long hours and cannot be relied upon for training, and sometimes not for the necessary practices to make them efficient in their work . . .

The Minister rightly said that, owing to the great number of people involved, it was necessary to have the voluntary system. I am not necessarily advocating a compulsory system, but I would point out that there are different degrees of compulsion. In all voluntary organisations, the tendency is for a few people to do all the work, and perhaps that tendency exists in some parts of these services. I believe that the time has come to give to those in authority greater control over the personnel.

It has been suggested to me that something like the sort of control exercised over Territorials in peace-time would be applicable. A man who voluntarily joins the Territorials undertakes to do certain training. If he fails, he is liable to a fine. It has been represented to me by a number of persons working in Civil

mining, and I do not know why A R P workers should be allowed to leave A R P work . . .

covered by the provision of shelters, but, of course, that figure of 20,000,000 includes every kind of shelter, and some of them are better than others. I disagree that it is defeatist to talk about shelters, and I disagree with the point of view of the Minister when he said that the deep shelter complex is one to be avoided. That is a fundamental mistake. Let us by all means be realists. I understand the point of view of the workers, to whom the Minister referred, who said that they did not want better shelters than their families, but let us be realists. If it is possible and if we can provide the material, surely it is fantastic to suggest that the personal consideration of the skilled aircraft mechanic, that he does not want to be better protected than his wife, should stand

in the way. He must be better protected because he is vital to the war effort of this country. I agree that that part of the shelter engineer for the attack, ;

does come. Experience from the war in Spain onwards has shown, I believe, the immense advantage which protection gives.

I hope that considerations of mere financial cost are not influencing the Government's opinion at the present time. If that were so, it would be a great misfortune. The argument which

time and opportunity allowed, is the right principle to adopt. The real consideration which must govern the amount of shelter provided is the availability of materials and labour. I understand that the existing programmes of the local authorities are being held up by a shortage of bricks, that is to say, not in brickyards but on the sites. I should like to see the Government commandeer

be in stock in each area, but I am afraid that the areas of which I am thinking are in rather a different position. They cannot get hold of the bricks to complete their shelter programme, and until they have completed their shelter programme it is no use trying

unemployed men and materials available, the fault lies in the organisation. There is, of course, a shortage of steel, but are there any substitutes for steel for reinforcing concrete? Is it a fact or not that thicker concrete will make up for the absence of reinforced steel? What is the objection in these days to making an appeal for volunteers to work after their usual occupations in order to do some of the unskilled work connected with building shelters? I can see no reason why they should not do so. There

week, saying that the Ministry were taking power to bring those who have lagged behind up to the standard that the Ministry think desirable. However, I must remind him that in the past the im

pression has been created that the Ministry were more anxious to damp down some of the boroughs which were most enterprising than to push on those which were not. I see him smiling. It may have been that some of those boroughs concerned—and they should not be mentioned by name—had plans which for technical reasons were arguable. However, that impression has been created widely, and I hope the Parliamentary Secretary will obliterate that impression by saying very insistently that he is putting the fullest possible drive into the task of seeing that all authorities complete their programmes. Then I would say, "Do not be satisfied with that but go on and have more shelters." I am not clear from what the Minister said whether this proposition of the two stage shelter has really been put before the local authorities or not. I would like to be sure that it has been put before the local authorities because after all, they initiate these schemes, and unless expert advisers of the Government recommend a scheme to the local authorities, it will not be taken up. I spoke to the head of a county organisation the other day, and he was not aware of what shelters were provided by industrial firms and commercial firms in his area.

Under the Government's scheme so far, there has been a certain amount of overlapping. As I understand it, local authorities are not responsible for what a private firm provides for its workpeople, and, therefore, the position is a little anomalous. There are various people responsible for shelters. The local authority is not responsible for all the shelters provided in its area. There are persons with means above £250, there are businesses, commercial firms, and, above all, there are local authorities. It may be that some firms have shelters which are used only during the day. Those shelters should be available during the night. It may be that the local authority is providing shelters for a man while he is in the street, that the landlord of the flats in which the

districts."

MR NOEL-BAKER (Derby): I find it difficult this afternoon to keep my mind very closely on the Debate while the battle rages in France upon which the fate of the country may depend. We have never treated air raid precautions as a party matter in this House, though we on these benches have sometimes thought it our duty, without any party spirit, to say that we thought that the Government were making too slow progress and to express our alarm at the lack of imagination which they showed. For that reason I take the greater pleasure in saying that in recent months there has been a great improvement, and it would be foolish and ungenerous not to recognise the progress which has been made.

There are two aspects of air-raid precautions about which I feel anxiety. . . . I admire in many of their aspects the plans that the Government have made for evacuation, but I do not believe that they are on a large enough scale, and I am certain that the French Army in its desperate fight has been greatly aided by the much larger-scale evacuation which the French Government had planned and carried out . . . The choice is not between evacuation or no evacuating. There is bound to be a very large movement of populations, far larger than the movement for which the Government have planned. The choice is whether you are going to have it planned or not planned . . .

I am not proposing that the Government should make plans for the billeting of *x* millions more of refugees—they have not the time—but I hope that they have already made plans for dealing with a large exodus of people from the south of Britain. I hope that they have planned the roads for one-way traffic. I hope that they have made big stocks of food in the western parts. I hope that they have moved or are moving animals, particularly cows and sheep, so as to keep up the food supply, apart from the other great advantages which would be obtained. I hope they are building up stocks of simple equipment which will be required for making improvised camps. If these things were done—I hope they have been—we could look forward to a very big movement of population without anything disastrous resulting from it.

The second thing to which I want to draw the attention of the Government very specially is that of shelters, of which both the Home Secretary and my hon. Friend the Member for North Cumberland (Mr. W. Roberts) have spoken. We have always, said on these Benches, we who have sat here in recent years, that the population ought to have the best bomb-proof shelter which it was practicable to give, that the cost should not be regarded as an objection, and that the Government themselves should pay; and many hon. Members in all quarters of the House have agreed with us when we have put that forward. I can quote my right hon.

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average citizen was to stay downstairs at home until his house fell about his ears. The first bomb in Spain blew that policy to pieces; but the Government, in fact, clung to it until October, 1938. Then at last the Minister responsible, who is now our Ambassador in Spain, said in the same Debate, in answer to the present Minister of Supply, that the experiences of the last twelve months had changed his view and we must have a more comprehensive shelter policy than had been contemplated in the past; and he went on to say that that policy must not only include blast-

proof shelter, but, where possible, bomb-proof shelter as well. But I am afraid that the Government have never fully accepted the implications of that speech. I think that, subconsciously at least, they have been guided by two principles. First, that it would be too difficult, it would make too big a dislocation to provide what used to be called deep shelter—and I will say a word about "deep" in a moment—for the whole population, and, second, that as you

they concluded, you must aim at giving a minimum shelter available to all. These principles, if they were in fact accepted by the Government, either consciously or subconsciously, were, I believe, utterly pernicious, and I want to urge upon the Government that, at this moment of national peril, they should sweep them completely away, should make a new start.

If they are to do that, they must really abandon another principle upon which their policy has been based. That policy has been this. They said that when a man was at work the employer must provide the shelter, and they made that a statutory obligation, but when he was at home, he must provide it for himself. The Government would provide it for him when he was neither at home nor at work, in other words, when he was in the street. Therefore local authorities were allowed to provide 20 per cent, 15 per cent, 12½ per cent of the population with public shelters in the street. But when it was pointed out to the Government that the individual could not provide a shelter for himself that was too poor, if he has less than £5 a week, and children", and they invented the Anderson shelter. But anybody who has more than that minimum income still either has, in accordance with the principle of individual responsibility, to provide a shelter for himself or go without.

I think that that principle was always wrong. It was wrong in theory for two main reasons. First, most individuals, as we found out in practice, could not make shelters for themselves, and even if they could, they would not. They were too idle, too careless, too busy. I do not know whether the Parliamentary Secretary will think that I am helping the enemy if I say that he told me in private conversation the other day that he himself would have no shelter, if the Germans caught him in bed. If he has not, how many other people above the £5 a week limit are without shelters? In the second place, the individual cannot make as good a shelter as the public authority can make except at a much higher cost per head. A public authority can make a shelter for 50 people which will give much greater protection at a given sum of money per head than the private man can obtain for himself and his family at that same sum. For these reasons,

the thing was wrong in principle. And it has certainly been proved wrong in practice, because unless the Government had departed from it, and had provided Anderson shelters would the Home Secretary have been able to give his figure of 20,000,000 this afternoon? Certainly not. A very large proportion indeed of the shelter which has been provided consists of what the Government call "Anderson shelters." I hope that the Government will be able to give a figure of personal responsibility.

I want to put to the Parliamentary Secretary about this general shelter situation. The first is this. The lack of shelter is perhaps worse where the danger is greatest, namely, among the very poor, in districts where it is not possible even to have the Anderson shelter. These are just the places where the houses give the least protection, where the congestion is greatest—in some parts of London it is 200 inhabitants to the acre—and where escape is hardest. The second thing is, as I have said already, that a very large proportion of our shelter, outside the factories, consists of the Anderson shelter. I do not want to run that shelter down. When it is properly erected it is pretty good. I think that it would reduce casualties by at least two thirds, and perhaps even more, but it certainly has weaknesses. One of them is the entrance, which is very seldom properly protected, though it can be by a very elaborate arrangement of sandbags. The second defect is an extremely important one. You have no protection against the noise, and I do not believe that the families of the workers are going to stay, with only Anderson shelters for a prolonged period of bombardment. I think they will either go to other shelters or they will go away. That being so, I want to urge upon the Government that they should in the danger areas—and we all know what they are—press on with the provision of more and better shelters. That means in practice erecting where they do not now exist either the strong brick shelter or the trench concrete shelter, such as the City of Westminster and many other places provide.

It means improving those shelters if you can do it, and I was very particularly glad to hear the Home Secretary say that he thought that could be done. Experts tell me that many of these shelters, for example, the Westminster trench shelters could be improved enormously by very simple means. You could dig a moat round the sides—what miners call a "give"—so that the shelters if there is a roof and put you did that to 1 another 15 or structures would 100 lb bomb

The hon. Member for North Cumberland very rightly said that a great deal of confusion had been introduced into this subject.

by the use of the word "deep". Of course, if you want absolute protection against all bombs, either you have to go very deep into the earth or you have to have a very great thickness of concrete. But not all bombs will be of the heaviest character. Quite a light shelter will stand up to the 20-lb bomb, the so-called "personnel" bomb, which the Germans use for aerodromes and such places. The Anderson shelter will certainly stand up to it if it is properly prepared. But the bomb which the Germans have used in by far the greatest numbers is their 50 kilo bomb, about 100 lbs. If we could make a lot of trench shelters to stand up against that, we should go very far in wiping out the effect which the Germans could hope to obtain by their air bombardments. I think that many more good shelters could be quickly prepared in places which have not yet been used. Every steel-frame building in the country ought to have a shelter in its basement. In many such buildings a high degree of protection could be given. In some, perhaps, the use of sandbags would be required, that might be done by voluntary labour, although I know the objections to that. In any case, the basement and perhaps the first floor of every building in the country could be turned into a public shelter. If the Parliamentary Secretary wants an example, there is an admirable one at the King's Cross Garage.

I have not understood, and I cannot find experts who understand, why the Government have not organised the underground railway stations as additional shelters. Perhaps it would mean new entrances and exits, if so, then make them. I do not know why in some places tunnelling should not be carried out. I know that at Luton it was not successful, because there was not a competent engineer on the job and there was not the right kind of soil. But I am told that in Nottingham, Newcastle, Birmingham and perhaps Sheffield, tunnelling in the rising ground of these places could be carried out at a low cost per head, and that this would give a great deal of very effective shelter. I know that all these things could be done and done quite quickly. I was told the other day by the hon. Member for East Woolwich (Mr. Hicks)—I hope it is not still true, but it wasn't long ago—that 150,000 building trade operatives were out of work. If it is still true, they could be put at once to work. We have ample supplies of bricks and concrete—

MR. QUIBELL (Brigg) Pleoty

MR. NOEL-BAKER: Pleoty now, says my hon. Friend, and he knows. I am criticising nobody, but I would like to suggest that the Government should take a new man of great dynamic

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nation's freedom is worth that sum, and we can certainly afford it. But I do not think the local authorities can afford it. The Home Secretary said this afternoon that the financial factor had not obstructed the provision of shelters. I beg him to believe that he is wrong. I could give him dozens of examples which support the other view. He said that the Government would pay 86 per cent in any case and that only 3 per cent would fall on the rates. If they can pay 86 per cent why not pay 100 per cent? It is no longer a question of making local authorities exercise due economy. The trouble is that they are not spending enough money. The Government now want to force them to do these things. I am quite certain that the burden already thrown upon local authorities is as much as they should be asked to bear. The Government used to tell us that the cases where more than 2d will fall on the rates will be rare. But the expenditure on A R P in my own constituency has amounted to a 1s 4d rate—and it was paid out of the rates—and on top of that there is to be another 6d for the provision of shelters for schoolchildren, towards which they will only get a 50 per cent grant.

I think the Government should pool our available resources and get on with the job. Experience has proved our danger. It has also proved that preparation pays. Last winter I was in Finland and there I saw the shelters which the Government had made for the whole population. Everybody had a shelter and it was a police offence not to go to a shelter when the sirens sounded unless one had special exemption to stay in one's own home or above ground. That policy enormously reduced the casualties which Finland suffered from Russian raids. Two years ago, the Japanese burnt thousands of Chinese civilians in the worst of all recorded air raids against the city of Chungking. The Chinese Government made tunnels in the rocky hillside and I am still getting letters from Chinese friends, written in these tunnels. People work and if necessary sleep in those tunnels. As a result, Chungking is still the capital of China and that fact has been of quite immense importance to Chinese resistance. The preparations for which we ask will cost some money, will mean a great new effort, but may save many British lives and they may be a vital factor in the victory which we shall win.

MR QUIBELL (Brigg) I think that most of us who listened this afternoon to the statement made by the Minister of Home Security found it satisfactory. It was a statement that gave me, at any rate, a good deal of confidence because a great deal of work of a useful character has been done and a great deal of progress has been made. But I want to say—and I trust the Parliamentary Secretary will give us some assurance with regard to it—that in some of the most vulnerable areas which not a single bit of earth or covering of any kind is put Anderson shelters. The Minister should know

may have given a large number of shelters to people who have erected them, many of them cannot be used in the case of air raids for the reason that there has been a lack of proper advice, either by the Home Department or by local councils, in connection with their erection. Men have been told to dig down three or four feet in the earth, and next morning they have found two feet of water in the place for the proposed shelter. This is not a rare occurrence.

With regard to the position of shelters, I think the policy of street shelters has been the right policy. In my experience they are very good shelters, and if we have to spend money, I would rather spend it in this way than on deep shelters which provide us with grave problems, particularly of that water supply. I entirely agree that in parts of Sheffield, South Wales and other places shelters cut into hillsides would be the cheapest and most efficient form of shelter.

There is no truth in the statement that there is lack of proper labour for the provision of shelters. The fact is that so far as the Government are concerned they have never attempted to organise the skilled labour in the country for the purpose of providing these shelters. I cannot understand why building contractors cannot be brought together to solve this difficulty. It has been solved, so far as shelters are concerned, in Scunthorpe.

MR ELLIS SMITH (Stoke). For years I have followed closely what has been happening on the Continent, and my special interest in the problem of providing adequate air-raid shelter accommodation has been increased by the growing realisation, as a result of recent international developments, that the people who suffer most in air raids are those resident in large industrial areas. Recent events have proved that beyond all shadow of doubt I made a tour of a number of industrial areas and what I saw in that tour has created some uneasiness in my mind. In order to ascertain who is responsible for the position and also

was good enough to reply to those Questions and in addition to provide me with copies of all the circulars sent out by the Home Office during the past 12 months. While, after examining those circulars, I am not satisfied with the Government's policy, yet I say that had the advice recorded in those circulars been carried out, the position would be much better than it is at present. I find that in one circular the Minister himself confirms my uneasiness.

It is particularly for the people in the lower grades of income that I wish to speak. I have read closely the trade journals which are concerned with this matter, such as the *Bulldozer*, the *Architects' Journal*, and publications of that character, and I find

that generally speaking adequate air raid shelter accommodation has been provided for those who are relatively well placed but this has not yet been done for the people in the lower grades of income. I plead with the Parliamentary Secretary to see that immediate and energetic action is taken to have the advice given in those circulars carried into effect in certain areas which I do not propose on this occasion to name. We find, from the experience of Rotterdam, how essential it is that effect should be given to this plea.

The probability is that attacks will be made on great industrial centres in this country. We have now reached a situation in which we ought to make provision for the worst eventuality that may occur.

If we are to be worthy of the spirit which is now finding expression in the increased production of aircraft and of all the equipment which is so urgently needed, especially after the Dunkirk evacuation, we should take immediate steps in this matter. Nothing is too good for those men who are engaged in this class of production, and for their wives and children.

MR R J TAYLOR (Morpeth) The Minister's speech raised, in my mind, a very serious question. Some time ago he made an appeal for more voluntary workers, but the question of increasing the number of workers is complicated to the extent that we are also asking men to do their utmost to increase our production. Consequently, it may not be possible to obtain the voluntary workers required in areas where there are munition works. I would point out to the Minister that, apart from the areas actually engaged in the production of munitions, we have also to bear in mind those areas which are producing the raw materials. It is no use denying that the miners are responding to the call for increased output, but it is impossible to expect miners to put forth their utmost efforts in the mines if the previous night they have been doing A R P work.

DR HADEN GUEST (Islington, North) I have some constructive suggestions to make this evening. I want to ask whether the whole question of the organisation of Civil Defence has been re surveyed from the standpoint of the new knowledge of the enemy methods of attack which we have from recent campaigns, notably in Holland and Belgium. The Home Secretary referred to these new methods and spoke of parachutists, but I do not think he referred to the troop-carrying aeroplanes. The fact that numbers of parachutists and troops may, subject to our hostile attack, be delivered in areas in this country alters the Civil Defence problem and makes it necessary to reconsider a number of questions with regard to the disposal of personnel and the functions which they shall carry out. Are the present numbers of Civil Defence personnel adequate? It is a large and efficient army. It is based upon voluntary service, which I hope

one of the most important factors in the new technique of invasion, and it is necessary that the Ministers in this country should learn that lesson. In every country that has been invaded, before the invasion took place, the Fifth Column specialised in an attack upon the real defenders of the people. The hon. Member on the Front Bench may smile, but in Austria, Norway, Holland, Denmark and Belgium there was the same story. When the question of Civil Defence was raised, a Bill was brought in by the present Ambassador to Spain. That Bill trifled with the question and I, in association with the hon. Member for North Islington and others, had the task of bringing home to the Minister and to the Government what the defence of the people really meant and the steps which should be taken to ensure it.

In the A.R.P. we have many of our party members, but those who until recently were the very closest friends of the Nazis are now making an unscrupulous attack upon the Communists. There is a movement taking place to put Communists off A.R.P. work. If there is a Communist at an A.R.P. post his one and only concern is the defence and the welfare of the people in his area. He is not concerned with profit, industrial undertakings or big financial enterprises . . .

MR TOMLINSON (Farnworth). . . A good deal has been said to day, and is being said in the country, about the loss of A.R.P. personnel. Is it to be wondered at that we have lost personnel? In the months during which they were serving their country by waiting, they stood a good many slights at the hands of the public, they received insults from Members of this House, they were chided for taking up cushy jobs, and it was said that in paying them £3 a week we were overpaying them. When that cut took place in the personnel we lost the best people. We are appealing to them to come back on part time work. A good many have done so in every district, but, with the demand for more and more output in industry, there is a limit to what can be expected, and there is a limit to the field from which you can draw A.R.P. personnel.

Because of that, I am about to suggest a new scheme which would tap a source not yet tapped, and of greater value than any other at present. I refer to the large body of young people between 14 and 18 adolescents, who have just left school. If there is one person in this land for whom the war is being fought, it is the adolescent. Could we not bring home to these young people the necessity for some trained service? It should not be difficult to rouse the young people of the country to a sense of all that is at stake, and to get that energy which perhaps is being used in other directions devoted to this work. Among the young people of 14 to 18, there are a vast number who could do most of the jobs that are to be done. Messengers and telephone operators are needed, and a vast army of what one might call servants to the principal servants. I see no better source for such

recruits than the adolescents. Youths of 17½ to 19½ are now catered for in the "parashots." That leaves a large body, however, of young folks who can be organised in these services.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE
MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY (MR. MABANE) I do

and at this time in every house in the country people are calculating from hour to hour—one might say from broadcast to broadcast—the effect of the German advance upon the military situation by land and by sea and in the air. So far we have been immune from air attack in this country, save for what we might regard as trial flights.

This Debate has concerned itself with most aspects of the work of the Ministry of Home Security. Perhaps I might first of all refer to some of the questions that have been asked on the subject of shelter. It was a good thing that at the beginning of the Debate the Committee were reminded that it was really proper to compare shelter as it now exists with the programme originally set out towards the end of 1938. As the Minister indicated, broadly that programme has been completed, the objective has been reached. We know that the butter is not spread evenly, but the shelter is there to that extent. Both the hon. Member for North Cumberland (Mr. W. Roberts) and the hon. Member for Derby said that our objective ought to be more and better shelter. I can say that that certainly is the objective of the Ministry of Home Security. As the Minister indicated in his opening speech, the goal has receded as time has passed, and we are now seeking to fulfil a much larger programme than was our objective at the end of 1938.

Many hon. Members have referred to the problem of bricks and bricklayers. As the hon. Member for Stoke (Mr. E. Smith) rightly said, in the past the Department has been able to issue circulars to local authorities, than that. Now, however, that further powers will be

intention of the Ministry to secure that shelter is provided at the greatest possible speed and then if we find that bricklayers are apparently not available for our purpose, we shall have to do what is the proper thing now and appeal to the Ministry of Labour who control these matters at the present time.

The hon. Member for Derby set a very high objective for us to reach. He suggested that everybody should have a shelter that would provide a great deal more protection than, I gather, code shelters provide at the present time. I must urge that the recommendations offered to the public in the booklet, "Your Home as an Air Raid Shelter" are extremely valuable and likely to

improve enormously the protective qualities of the house if the instructions in the booklet are carried out .

MR ELLIS SMITH I have read the book, and I think it is a very good book, provided you are living in a house where you are able to carry out the advice contained in it, but the people for whom I am particularly speaking do not live in houses of that character, and therefore, cannot carry out the advice

MR MABANE The hon Gentleman must remember that those with an income of less than £5 per week are entitled to have a shelter free, so the booklet really does not apply to them

MR NOEL BAKER Are the shelters which public authorities are putting up intended to be confined only to those in the streets or are they to be used for the population as a whole? I ardently hope that the Minister will say they are to be used by the public as a whole, and that the Government will extend the number of these shelters so that an increasingly large number of people, especially in danger areas, can go to them and get shelter. Otherwise, a great deal which has been done by local authorities is perfect nonsense. The Eaton Square shelter will hold 1,500 people, but there will never be 1,500 people in Eaton Square

MR MABANE In many cases multiple shelters are expressly provided in order that people may go to them from their houses. It is quite proper for them to do so, but, of course, shelters provided for the public caught in the streets are intended for the use of people caught in the streets, and no one else. It is not a penal offence for anyone to go in them. It is, however, unwise, for the simple reason that they are probably too far away from where the people live.

Now I would like to deal with the point raised by the hon Member for Brigg (Mr Quibell). I am happy to be able to tell the hon Member that from yesterday, 11 June, it became an offence to fail to cover an Anderson shelter with the adequate amount of earth or to fail to erect it.

Many Members have referred to the personnel of the Civil Defence service. The hon Member for Mansfield (Mr C Brown) asked whether the personnel was a changing personnel. It would be difficult to say exactly, but my own experience in many parts of the country is that the personnel does not change unless people leave the district or go into another occupation—that is, the people who have never in any real sense belonged to the service. There is, of course, a large number of people who have enrolled but have never taken an active part in the service. In most parts of the country, however, those who have joined the service have remained extremely loyal.

There has been much interest shown in many parts of the

Committee over the degree of control that might be exercised over the personnel of the service. I should like to make it clear that the demand for compulsory service in Civil Defence is by no means general. There are many parts of the country where the service is perfectly happily organised on a voluntary basis and where there would be very much objection to an alteration of that basis. As to control as the Minister said in his opening statement, there is now a regulation which enables an order to be made to provide a greater degree of control than hitherto has been the case as regards full time personnel.

The hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr R. J. Taylor) said it was a great pity that full time paid personnel should be released from the service. At the present time they are not being released unless they are required for the Army, or work of a greater degree of national importance. The hon. Member for North Cumberland asked me whether I could say something about the result of the appeal made during the past week. Perhaps it is a little early to give any figures but I can say that in many places the response has been remarkably good. Up to the present time 7,000 new volunteers have joined the service since 8 June as a result of the appeal. Those 7,000 are drawn from particular areas of the country—

SIR WILLIAM WAYLAND (Canterbury) Is there not competition in recruiting between the A.R.P. and the Local Defence Volunteer Corps?

MR MABANE Reports show that the interference has been nothing like so much as might have been expected.

MR G. GRIFFITHS Could the War Department appeal for recruits from the same platform?

MR MABANE Certainly. I should like to refer, before concluding to one aspect of the work of the Department that has not loomed large in the Debate. Efforts have been made to secure, by circulars and leaflets, that the public know exactly what to do. Hon. Members know that cards have been distributed to every householder giving detailed instructions as to what to do, where the nearest warden's post is situated and so on. Hon. Members know too that stirrup pumps have been sent to local authorities throughout the country and that they are getting together teams of householders who will be trained in the use of these stirrup pumps so that the danger from incendiary bombs will be much reduced.

MR GALLACHER Is the Minister aware that some members of our party who have had the greatest possible experience in countering this danger as a result of their work in Spain, and

who are giving their services to air-raid precautions, are being pushed out?

MR MABANE Stirrup pump teams are being prepared throughout the country and in most parts of the country, I wish I could say in all public lectures are being arranged in order that as many people as wish—and I hope all will—may secure instruction from those who are trained in air raid action

I have tried to deal with all the points which have been raised by hon Members in the Debate, and I hope I have not missed any point of major importance. The objective of the work of the Ministry is to enable this country not merely to resist with calm courage an attack from the air, but to enable it also to proceed with the vital work of producing ever more and more material although that may have to be done in conditions of great stress and difficulty. May I reduce to a phrase the object of the Ministry of Home Security? It is to reduce Hitler's dividend when his bombers come. In the year before the outbreak of war much progress was made. That rate of progress has been greatly accelerated in the nine months since war began, and I am sure it is the determination of every one at the Ministry to see that that accelerated progress shall continue.

One last word. Let it be clear to all, and I am sure it is clear to hon Members that our preparations are not based on fear. Air raid shelters are not funk holes. The morale of our civilian population is high. There are few who would not be willing to accept an additional risk for themselves if by so doing they could put one more weapon into the hands of our fighting forces. I do not believe that in this matter the civilian population are primarily concerned to save their own skins. They take a bolder, a braver and if I may use the word, a more aggressive view. They desire life, not merely for its own sake, but because they know that if any one goes, and some of us must, then there will be one less to bring defeat to the enemy and liberation to the world.

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

28 May, 1940

MR NOEL BAKER (Derby) We have lost a battle because of the enemy's advantages in treachery, in brutality in bombing aircraft and in tanks. It is on the day when we have lost or may lose that battle that we should remember that the greatest of all soldiers Napoleon said that in war the moral factor is the most important. It is the moral factor that decides the history of a nation and the fate of the world.

Our duty is to bring us victory in the end. When we say "will power" we

mean opinion—conscious, organised, articulate opinion founded upon truth. It is, in fact, the opinion in this country, in the countries of our Allies, in neutral countries and in Germany upon which the force, the duration and the outcome of the war will inevitably depend. It is the task of the Ministry of Information to guide, form and express that opinion in this country, to give the neutrals the material upon which they can found their judgment, and to play a part, I think a very important part, in making the Germans understand what is the real choice before them. In other words, the Ministry have to make our public, other nations and the German people understand what we are fighting against, what we are fighting for and our ability to defend our cause effectively to the end. That is the substance of the Ministry's work as we see it, it is to make the world understand our moral principles and our material power.

Our criticism of the Ministry has been that up to now it has largely failed in carrying out that task. Our own people, no doubt, have before them the principles in which they themselves believe. We are very far from having convinced neutral countries that that is what we mean to do.

neutrals of the fact. I am afraid that we have not really made them understand, and I do not think we have made our own people understand, what Nazism in practice really means.

Our people have not in their minds a living picture of the sufferings of Poland. They have no idea of what Goering's knock-out blow really means. I begged the Ministry of Information last October to collect all the evidence they could get from every source and try to make a picture, which the world could see, of this knock out blow in practice—the annihilation of towns and

of Poland was a stupendous and even a glorious military achievement. It was not anything of the kind. It was a bestial crime against humanity, against the past, against this generation and against generations still to come.

To-day the neutrals all talk about the lesson of Poland—I have argued it for hours in half a dozen neutral countries since the war began—but there is not one who really understands the true lesson of Poland. It is the lesson that unless the Nazis are finally and totally destroyed there will be no freedom and no indepen-

Now let me turn to the neutrals. We all hate the word "neutrality" nowadays. The one good product of the war up to date is that it has shown that neutrality between right and wrong, between justice and aggression, does not bring peace or freedom to any nation in the world. Our task now—the Minister's task—is to persuade them that we are fighting for the right, that our existence is the sole remaining obstacle between them and Nazi tyranny in their homes, and that our cause in the end will triumph. Are our efforts in neutral countries worth while? When I hear of Nazi tongs in South America breaking up cinemas where "The lion has wings" is shown, I am certain that our efforts are worth while. . .

I am told that even our news service, meritorious though it is in many ways, is always later than the German, and that in consequence it loses the headlines, it is printed in smaller print, it comes last, and the public perhaps never get to it. Half the public take their news nowadays in photographs and captions. Our photographs are good, but again they are always too late. Two days after the Germans captured Oslo, the American papers were carrying a double page German photograph of their triumph—two days. We can do it if we want to. It is only money, facilities and the necessary decisions that are required, and I hope the Minister will take them. I hope that he will take that film "Pastor Hall," and I hope that he will add an introduction by a refugee, explaining it. If he wants me to I will find him one who spent 14 months in Buchenwald and Dachau and who is perfectly ready to speak. I hope above all that he will take over, organise and greatly extend the wireless work which we are doing in foreign countries. I have nothing but admiration for what the B B C have done in the last 12 months. Within the limits of the present conception, their programme of 23 languages in 24 hours is a great achievement. .

Foreign news is no part of the proper function of the B B C, and in fact, although that news is going through the B B C, the organisation is working in vile conditions. It has no proper office space, no studio space, no proper organising power, it is grossly understaffed, it has not enough real experts and very few of these people have radio personality. I suggest to the Minister that he should take it over, rehouse it, strengthen it and, above all, give it more transmitter time. I know of the difficulties about transmitters and I know that we are building them, but again we are always too little and too late. I know of the difficulties about wave lengths, but there is a lot more which we can do if we want to do it. . . I hope that the Minister will get on with this job and that he will remember the peasants in the villages of Denmark, the squires in Hungary and the journalists in Portugal and Greece who will be tuning in to night, for 10 minutes only, to hear the only news which they can believe. .

In Germany we have, next to the French, potentially the most numerous and most powerful of our allies. We know that there

are millions of Germans who loathe and detest the crimes which are being committed in their name, and how many millions of Germans have themselves felt the iron grip of the despot's hand, judging by the mere fact that 500,000 have passed through the concentration camps and by the fact that every report from Germany this morning tells us that the smashing victories of Hitler's army have produced no elation among the civil population of any country. Let us realise, too, that these people who hate Hitler are largely helpless—or at least they believe they are. But it is always true that we should be telling the German people ceaselessly, morning noon and night, by wireless, that only our principles can save them from this bloody bondage. We should be telling them that Hitler's victory will mean more war, more disease and more hunger stalking through their land, the triumph of enemies from which bombs and tanks can never save them. We should be telling them that our victory will liberate them and that, if they will help to smash Nazism and, what is even more important, to smash for good and all the Prussian militarism of the past, we will do all on our side to help them to make a different Germany with which we can live at peace. We should tell them that the sooner they help us the less will be the price in blood and money, and other nations' hatred, which they will have to pay. I hope that the Minister will give to enemy propaganda by wireless all the manpower, the money and the transmitter time that it requires.

We ask the Minister and the Government to day that in this task, as in others, they shall be worthy of the brave and generous people whom it is their destiny to lead.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION (MR DUFF COOPER)

The speech to which we have just listened could not possibly have been bettered. Let me in a few words, give my own view of the duties of the Ministry of Information. First and foremost, its duty is to give accurate information to the people of this country with the minimum of delay. Unfortunately, promptitude and accuracy are often at war with one another. A report reaches the authorities—it seems sufficiently well substantiated, but it is not completely vouched for and it cannot be guaranteed as the truth. Yet at the same time, if it is held up, the delay will cause great inconvenience, and above all, it will cause this great danger, that the rumour will get about before the news. That is the first of the difficulties and dilemmas with which we have to cope, the problem of deciding between the desirability of promptitude and the still greater desirability of accuracy.

It is our duty abroad to encourage all those forces in neutral and enemy countries, forces, as the hon. Gentleman has so rightly observed, which are still upon our side, which sympathise with the cause for which we are fighting, and all those silenced voices but not deadened brains inside enemy countries which do not know

the things for which they have been compelled to fight. It becomes ever more important that those forces should be stimulated that we should get to them through the various means at our disposal the truth which is being so assiduously and successfully concealed and it is equally important that we should do our best to guide influence, lead and inform opinion at home.

Immediately the problem of this Ministry arises. Shall we tell all the bad news? Shall we exaggerate in order to wake up the mind of the nation to the dangers with which it is faced? There is another danger in telling the news, and that is in assisting the enemy. Every particle of news has to be carefully scrutinised with this view. Is it something which the enemy knows already? If so, it cannot help him or hinder us to disclose it. But is it something which should be concealed from him, something which he is longing to know and which may help him to produce a larger supply of munitions or an additional corps of men? Those are the questions which one has to ask oneself first of all before releasing information.

Then you should also ask yourself. Will this news, for which the country is perhaps not sufficiently prepared, come as too great a shock to the minds of the people? Or, on the other hand, is it not wiser that they should know the full truth of the situation? That they should know the full truth we believe to be essential at all times. I am confident that the people of this country, knowing all the facts will never react towards those facts however dire and terrible they may be or may appear at first sight, save with confidence and courage. All that we want to do is to ensure that in the minds of the ordinary man and woman, walking about, doing their duty and working hard, with little time to read the papers and to speculate upon the future or to study strategy, there should exist a true picture of the situation as it really exists.

The hon. Gentleman who opened the Debate said that my Ministry should endeavour as far as possible to centralise and control all the sources of information. I entirely agree, and I am doing my best to effect that very centralisation so as to bring them, as I have succeeded in doing to some extent already, under the control of one Ministry. The policy of what the Ministry has to say should be decided by the War Cabinet, and above all by the Foreign Office in connection with what we should say in foreign countries. But the means of conveying those views and those facts to the world should be under the Ministry of Information, and the necessary steps are being taken to arrange that there shall be a greater centralisation of agencies publishing news and centralising them all under one Ministry.

SIR PATRICK HANNON (Birmingham, Moseley) Does that mean that no information at all will be given to the Press or to the public except by the Ministry of Information, that no officer or head of a Department can give a Press interview except through the Ministry of Information or my right hon. Friend?

MR COOPER: It does not go quite so far as that, but we have arranged that all official announcements for the B B C should in future be communicated to them through the Ministry of Information in order to ensure that all their information is correct. In these days there is a grave danger of our enemies, both within and without, attempting to spread false information, and we are now insisting that every official announcement on any question of policy or administration that reaches the B B C should come directly through the Ministry of Information. By the

bogus orders

Of course, the

the censorship

information. We

are keeping in the closest touch with the Press, who are most anxious to collaborate and to give us all the assistance they can. They come daily to the Ministry, which is open day and night, they accept the information which we give them and also guidance as to the tone with which that information shall be conveyed.

The hon. Gentleman very rightly said that we must remember the important elements in Germany who do not agree with the present régime or with their crimes. I will do all in my power while I am at the Ministry to convey to that ever-existent, but crushed, minority within the enemy country the views that we hold here and I shall encourage them to hope, as I hope myself, that when the war is over and a better régime exists throughout the world those people will also be given an opportunity of sharing in the full what prosperity remains to any of us. That is the first message that we should send them. The second message, in which I think the hon. Member referred, should point out the certainty that in the end they must be beaten, and that, therefore, it is not only in accordance with their principles and policies to oppose the continuance of the war, but in accordance with the truest patriotism from the point of view of a good German for them to wish for the earliest possible peace because the sooner it comes the more there will be left for them and others to share in Europe and the less bitter will be the hostility and hatred with which they must expect to be treated when they come to the council table.

31 July, 1940

EMERGENCY POWERS (DEFENCE) ACT, 1939.

MR SILVERMAN (Nelson and Colne) I beg to move.

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying that the Order in Council amending the Defence (General) Regulations, dated 29 May, 1940, a copy of which was presented to this House on 4 June, be annulled."

I invite hon Members to give serious attention to this new Regulation, because unless I am very greatly mistaken, its effect will be to put the Minister of Home Security in a position by no means inferior, as regards the scope of his powers over newspapers, to that occupied by the distinguished Dr Goebbels in Germany. That Regulation, in the hands of an unscrupulous Government or Minister—I do not say that the present Minister is unscrupulous, but one has to judge Regulations by the powers which they give and not by the use made of them by a particular Minister or Government at a particular time—would enable the executive to prevent the expression of any kind of opinion in any newspaper. One has only to look at the wording of the Regulation to see that that is by no means an exaggerated claim concerning the scope of the authority given. It reads.

“If the Secretary of State is satisfied”—

that is the only condition—

“that there is, in any newspaper, a systematic publication of matter which is, in his opinion, calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution to a successful issue of any war in which His Majesty is engaged, he may by order apply the provisions of this Regulation to that newspaper.”

If he does so, it follows that,

“No person shall print, publish or distribute or be in any way concerned in the printing, publication or distribution of any newspaper to which this Regulation applies.”

In order to make quite certain that the newspaper or the persons associated with it shall not escape, the Regulation goes on to provide that

“An order of the Secretary of State under this Regulation specifying a newspaper by name shall have effect not only with respect to any newspaper so named but with respect to any newspaper published after the date of the order if the publication thereof is in any respect in continuation of, or in substitution for, the publication of the newspaper named in the order.”

Those are very drastic powers. It is not as though there were any kind of review of or check on the Minister's opinion. [Interruption] I hear signs of approval in not unexpected quarters, but those quarters appear to approve—and I do not say they are wrong—of the particular Government and Minister.

We are living in extremely dangerous times in which no doubt exceptional powers have to be vested in the executive, and where those exceptional powers are necessary, I do not know that anyone would grudge them or hesitate to afford them, but before agreeing to give a completely unlimited power of this sort, surely it is worth while examining what powers the Secretary of State already

had and what use he made of them . . . He had, first of all, Regulation 2A. A systematic endeavour to foment opposition to the successful prosecution of the war would undoubtedly be

"an act likely to assist the enemy or prejudice the public safety or the defence of the Realm or the efficient prosecution of the war."

Regulation 2A provides that if any person commits such an act, he shall be liable on conviction on indictment to penal servitude for life. But that is not the whole of the Secretary of State's powers, it is only the beginning. Regulation 2C is specifically directed to the Press, it deals with the corruption of public morale, and it has language which is very like the language of Regulation 2D. If it appears to the Secretary of State that any person is concerned in the systematic publication of matter which is, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution to a successful conclusion of the war, and that serious mischief may be caused—and one may imagine that serious mischief would undoubtedly follow such an attempt—the Secretary of State may, without going to any authority, without the leave of any court, without being subject to any appeal to the courts or to any check or control of any kind, serve a warning upon the person offending.

What follows upon that warning? If anyone, after such a notice has been served upon him, continues to publish matter—not necessarily matter which was the subject of a warning, but any matter calculated to foment opposition—he then commits an offence for which he is liable to penal servitude for a term not exceeding seven years, or a fine not exceeding £500, or both. But there is a saving clause, that the man upon whom notice has been served, and who is then charged with committing an act after the warning may prove, if he can, certain defences in court which would be an excuse. It might be said that that is all very well, and that that is the Secretary of State's power only to effect the

where an offence has been committed under Regulation 2C, to prohibit the use of that press unless the owner of it can satisfy the High Court that the use of the press ought to be continued.

This seems to me, and I hope it will seem to the House, to be ample power to prevent the mischief aimed at in the Regulations that I am attacking. But they all have what is to my mind a saving grace, but which appears to the Secretary of State to be a fatal flaw, namely, that the offender, or man charged with an offence, has his right of appeal to the court. Even then the Home Secretary does not have to prove that his original warning was justified. He merely has to prove that the warning was given, and if after that warning, an offence is committed and matter is published—I repeat, matter which is not the subject of

the warning but any matter calculated to foment opposition to the war—he has his action and the man has his defence. Under Regulation 2D it will be found that there are no more powers conferred on the Secretary of State than there were before. He cannot interfere with anything with which he could not interfere before, but there is the vital difference that he becomes the sole judge in his own case, and that what was before a judicial matter becomes an executive act.

The morale of this country is good and it is high, and there is no widespread, systematic publication of matter in newspapers calculated to prevent us carrying on the war to a successful conclusion. But if there is, then I ask the Home Secretary what use he has made of the very drastic powers which he already has. If they have proved inadequate, let him come and ask for more, but if he has not used them, and if the reason is that it is not necessary to use them at all, I ask him what claim he has to unlimited powers of this kind which give him, as I said before, complete power over the whole Press of the country, and place him in a position no whit inferior to that of Dr Goebbels in the control of newspapers.

From my point of view, and from the point of view of almost everyone in this House and in the country as a whole, this is a war of ideas. It does not seem to me that you can win a war of ideas if you put Colonel Blimp in sole charge, and it does not seem to me that you can win a war of ideas if you allow the position of authority to be exercised by people who have not grasped what an idea is. When one considers some recent acts of the Executive, the Special Courts Bill, with which we were dealing a few weeks ago, where important concessions and obvious elementary concessions were

.....

pay to maintain the rest? I say to the Home Secretary that we ought to reconsider this Regulation, and that he ought not to seek dictatorial powers of this kind which may be exercised by other Governments and other Ministers in other circumstances, unless he is satisfied himself and can satisfy this House that only powers of this kind, subject to no appeal, subject to no review, subject to no check or control, are necessary to him; and he cannot do that until the powers which he had, without these arbitrary powers, were proved inadequate in their use.

COMMANDER KING-HALL (Ormskirk): I beg to second the Motion. . . .

I think that there will be general agreement, whether we like the Regulations or not, that they go very far in touching the

liberty of the Press I hope I shall have the whole House with

systematically publishes matter which jeopardises the successful issue of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged I find it difficult to see how one can define those all important words "the successful issue of any war"

To give a concrete example I will take the case of the war in which we are engaged against Italy I do not think I shall be accused of being a friend of dictatorial methods but my conception of what is a successful issue of the war against Italy would go a good deal further than the conception in the minds of some other Members There is the practical question for instance as to whether the successful issue of the war against Italy involves the restoration of Ethiopian independence That being the case I find great difficulty in seeing the necessity for Regulations of this character which leave to the decision of one man the Home Secretary, however wise humane and far seeing he may be the decision as to what is or what is not to constitute a successful issue to the war He may, indeed change his opinion in this matter as the war proceeds Under the new Regulations which we are now praying to be annulled there is no appeal whatever against his decision in that matter In the present Regulations the Secretary of State has to give a warning and has to go to the courts

Frankly I do not understand why the existing Regulations are not enough

I believe that the most important asset we have in what I think is a war of ideas—and I do not believe there is much difference between those who think it is a war of ideas and those who think it is a war to defend our lives—is the national spirit of unity It is vital that we should maintain that unity and I am certain that as the war begins to go against the enemy in a material sense

powers and that the existing powers are not adequate for his purpose

MR. GLENVIL HALL (Colne Valley) Shortly before we began this Debate some of us attended a meeting upstairs dealing with the freedom of the Press It was made evident there that

we do get to-day in periodicals presumably Conservative in outlook and colour, articles which in the eyes of many people would come under these Regulations. It would, I suppose, depend on how the Home Secretary looked at it whether it came under this

in the minds of many Members of the House and thousands of people outside that the Press may be put under control

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (SIR JOHN ANDERSON) I should like to make it perfectly clear at the outset that, so far as I am aware, there is no difference between those who have risen to criticise these Regulations and the Government on one point. It is the general principle that the fullest possible liberty consistent with vital national interests, should be allowed to the Press. Several speakers emphasised the point that the war in which we find ourselves engaged is a war of ideas. I fully accept that. It is a contest, a moral combat, between the doctrine of liberty and the doctrine of despotism, and one of the tenets most firmly held by those who believe in the doctrine of liberty is the tenet that freedom should be allowed to the Press to criticise the Government and to advocate ideas which may not be acceptable to the majority. The question, therefore, which the House has to decide is simply whether freedom for the expression of opinion should entail freedom to assist the enemy by the systematic publication of matters calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue. Are we to allow freedom for organised and persistent defeatist propaganda?

The whole thing can be put in a nutshell. The reason why it seemed, not merely to the Home Secretary but to the Government, that a Regulation of this kind, admittedly very drastic, was necessary is this—the invasion, the over-running, in a very short space of time, of Holland, Belgium and part of France brought home to us in a way it had never been brought home to us before that we in this country were exposed to perils of a kind that most of us had never before imagined. What we have to ask ourselves, and what the Government had to ask themselves, before deciding to make this very drastic Regulation, was whether if the direst peril we can imagine were to come upon us, if we were to find ourselves under attack from a power never before experienced, it would be right to allow the publication of matter calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue. How could we, in those circumstances—we have to face the realities—be content with the procedure of Regulation 2c? What does it involve? How—

MR SILVERMAN Would the right hon Gentleman allow me—

SIR J ANDERSON No I will not give way, particularly in the middle of a sentence What I was putting to the House was whether, in those circumstances of dire peril, we were to be content with the procedure of 2c, a Regulation for which I took full responsibility at the time and which I thought fully adequate What is the procedure under that Regulation? You must first give notice indicating the matters which, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, may bring the publisher within the ambit of the Regulation Until such notice is given, no question of an offence against the Regulation arises If the publication of such or similar matter recurs, proceedings can then be taken in the courts If those proceedings result in a conviction, then, and only then, can executive action be taken by way of closing down the publication dealing with the offending matter

I do ask, in all seriousness, whether such a procedure is wholly adequate for the requirements of the situation which I have pictured? It is not a fanciful picture but one that may, sooner than we think, prove to be a grim reality I do not like these drastic powers but I say, frankly, that, so long as I am Home Secretary, I will not shrink from advocating in this House when critical circumstances warrant it the exercise of powers which, in ordinary times, I would regard with utter repugnance I say, in all seriousness, that this is a matter in which the safeguards that are necessary must be found, not in the way in which we sought to find safeguards in Regulation 2c, but in the exercise of vigilance by the House of Commons itself Surely the House of Commons will not hesitate to deal with a Minister who exercises wantonly and without proper justification such powers as this Regulation confers Therefore, I have no hesitation whatever in recommending the House to reject this Prayer

MR GLENVIL HALL Would the right hon Gentleman be good enough to answer the point that I tried to make, dealing with the word "systematic"? If I heard him aright, his view is that 2c, with its provision for warning and for action in the

under 2c.

MR SILVERMAN Perhaps I might remind the right hon Gentleman of the point which I made, so that he might answer both together

SIR J ANDERSON rose—

MR. SILVERMAN: I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will not get too impatient with me. We all have responsibility in this matter. He complains that the procedure under 2c would be too long, but what prevents him from using 2d as it stands, taking to himself the power of executive decision instantaneously, and still preserving to the proprietor of the newspaper the right that he had under 94A, of his own initiative to go to the court, after the executive action had been urgently taken, in order to ask the court to review what had been done? That would not interfere in any way with the right of the right hon. Gentleman to take action on the spot. Why could he not have done that?

SIR J. ANDERSON: I do not think that is quite the point which was made by the hon. Gentleman in his earlier speech.

MR. SILVERMAN: It certainly was.

SIR J. ANDERSON: Perhaps I might deal first with the point raised by the hon. Member for Colne Valley (Mr. Glenvil Hall). If the question of systematic publication arises in the case of a newspaper to which Regulation 2d is applied, it would be easier for any executive authority to satisfy itself whether there had been systematic publication than in some other cases, such as, that in which a man makes a speech now and again. In any case the time taken to decide whether there is systematic publication has to be added to the time necessary to give warning, to launch proceedings, and to bring them to a successful conclusion. I think that everyone familiar with the processes of the law will agree that, during the time inevitably involved between the discovery of publication of matter calculated to prevent the successful prosecution of the war and the bringing to an issue of proceedings, the greatest mischief might occur. The hon. Member for Nelson and Colne (Mr. Silverman) asked why we were not content to take the powers conferred by Regulation 2d and then leave the issue to be determined by the court.

MR. SILVERMAN: Oh, no. I did not suggest that at all.

SIR J. ANDERSON: I am very sorry. I have done my best to understand the hon. Gentleman.

MR. SILVERMAN: I am sorry if I did not make myself clear. Let me try again. The right hon. Gentleman was explaining to the House that the reason why he needed the powers of 2c was that 2c was insufficient, in that they took too long, whereas he might have to act quickly. I say to him: Take powers under 2d to act quickly, and stop publication, but leave to the owner of the Press the initiative, if he chooses to take it—he might not

choose to take it—the right which he had under 94A, to go to the court and question what has been done. Why not?

SIR J. ANDERSON. The hon. Gentleman does an injustice to his own powers of exposition. I understood perfectly what he meant, but I thought I put the point rather more briefly. He suggests that we should take action under 2D and then leave it to the court, if the court is moved whether the action has been taken at that point in a word or two; that point can be taken, in the interests of the Executive Government, it seemed to me and to those associated with me, that it would more properly be judged by the House of Commons than by any court. [HON. MEMBERS: No.] For that reason, we took the powers conferred by this Regulation.

MR. PICKTHORN. To some of us, it seems that the real danger in which our general liberties are involved at present is precisely that the Executive now controls some 99/100ths of this House. If there is any danger to our Press—and we are now talking particularly about the Press—it is because of the sewnness of the hands in which the Press lies now, and because a considerable proportion of those few hands belong to those who are also Members of the Government.

MAJOR MILNER (Leeds, South East). Little by little in this House powers have been taken by various Government Departments not least by the Home Secretary to take executive action the matter being left entirely in the hands of the Executive and there being no recourse to the courts and no appeal of any shape or kind. We know that that action was taken in the case of aliens, and only recently has the Home Secretary been prevailed upon to adopt another course and set up a tribunal. Here is another instance of precisely the same thing. In all instances, if it be necessary to take action, there must be a court of appeal or a form of recourse to the courts by which the correctness of the Executive's action can be tested.

SIR RICHARD ACLAND (Barnstaple). I think in these recent discussions on civil liberties the House as a whole, has come to recognise—and I believe eventually Ministers will come to recognise—that in this matter there are two dangers and not one. There is the one danger of which the Executive are aware, that they may have too small powers for dealing with threats to national morale or whatever it may be. But that is not the only danger. The other danger is that the Executive may have too great powers over the liberty of the subject. Surely if our eyes have been opened to anything that has happened in France, they have been opened to the appalling dangers which arise when the

Executive have too great powers. Was the surrender of Holland, Belgium, or France in any way due to any surrender policy advocated in any newspaper? Surely not. It was due to the fact that the Executive had too much power, and were able to disregard public opinion. I submit that what can be done under these Regulations, as now drafted—so inaptly drafted for the emergency which the right hon. Gentleman described to us—is much more serious. Under the Regulations, as they stood originally, the Home Secretary had power to warn, to prosecute, and, on conviction, to close the Press. Now he has to express an opinion—no warning, no appeal—and he can proscribe the paper and close the press. That power is much too great . . .

MR. LIPSON (Cheltenham). In spite of the controversial tone of the discussion, I believe that in the main there is considerable agreement on all sides, and that the issue is really a very narrow one. It is over the question of appeal—not the whole principle of appeal. The Home Secretary has the right of appeal of Commons. It is

clearly so small, I appeal to the Home Secretary to give further consideration to the matter. In a question of this kind the appeal to the law, the judicial appeal, may have more value than the appeal to the House of Commons, because of the circumstances in which my right hon. Friend envisages these powers may have to be used and the mood of the House of Commons on these occasions.

MR. KENNETH LINDSAY (Kilmarnock): I rise to reinforce the appeal which has been so carefully put by the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Lipson). We had a meeting upstairs this afternoon, and it was very evident from the large number of Members present, that there is a growing feeling that we are not quite prepared at every point to trust the Executive, even though it has this new complexion. I know, for instance, that warnings have been given to papers of very serious repute. I also know that suggestions have been made that there should be something in the nature of "one paper." I know that these matters have not been raised on the Floor of the House, but we have heard this afternoon enough to make us feel that the right hon. Gentleman is being made the victim, time after time, of powers which he really does not want to use; and in many instances we do not know the occasion on which he wants to use them. Something might happen, which has not happened for a thousand years. Will the right hon. Gentleman allow some form of judicial appeal to be given in such cases? I think that the Debate has been narrowed down to that point.

MAJOR MILNER. In the discussion on the Courts (Emergency Powers) Bill a few days ago, the right hon. Gentleman said,

and very properly, that, having once discussed with Members the content of certain Regulations, he would not think at a later date of altering those Regulations without having some consultation. He would not consider himself an honourable man, he said, if he took advantage of the situation and, having once consulted hon. Members, did not consult with them later if he desired to make alterations. With every respect to the right hon. Gentleman, has he not in regard to this particular Regulation committed a breach of the agreement or obligation which he undertook a week ago? If he says "No," I will accept it at once.

SIR J. ANDERSON I have certainly expressed the view, and it is the view that I held then, that where there has been consultation in regard to a subject matter, it is not right that action should be taken subsequently, without further consultation, which would involve a departure from understandings previously arrived at. But the action taken in this case should be justified by the emergency in which it was taken.

MAJOR MILNER Will the right hon. Gentleman now take advantage of the circumstances?

MR. GALLACHER (Fife, West) As one who is interested, I would like to say a word or two. Everyone knows that under this Regulation the *Daily Worker* is in constant danger, but that is not because it systematically publishes matter that affects the successful issue of the war. As an hon. Member opposite said, there are different ideas of what constitutes a successful issue of the war. My idea of the successful issue of the war is very different from the ideas represented by the Front Bench opposite. My idea of the successful issue of the war is freedom—freedom for the people of Europe and for the Colonial people. Is that the conception of the party opposite? No, Sir, far from it. The *Daily Worker* is in danger, not because of the systematic publication of the war, opinions.

You cannot encourage and stimulate a people by Regulations of this kind. The *Daily Worker* was warned. I will make this challenge. I am prepared to go with the Home Secretary to any part of the country where there is a wide circulation of the *Daily Worker*, and I guarantee that we would find in that area there is no despondency. There is strength, courage and resolution, with great hope for the future, because they understand that the old world is passing and that a new world is coming into being. There is no despondency.

We are in the position that the Press can be closed down and the Home Secretary has not to explain why such action was taken. If he gives a warning you have to think for yourself what you

have been doing wrong. It is obvious that, if the Home Secretary believes a paper has published matter that comes under these Regulations, he must know what that matter is. If he knows, he should be prepared to say what it is but according to these Regulations he has not to say what is wrong with the matter, articles or news which comes under this Regulation. I am of the opinion that power of that kind can be of the greatest danger if it is used.

The only justification which the Home Secretary has for this Regulation is that it has never been used and is not likely to be used. That is not a judicial way to approach this question . . .

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (SIR DONALD SOMERVILLE). Those who heard my right hon. Friend felt—as I certainly felt—that he made an unanswerable case for the power of rapid Executive action in circumstances in which we hope we may not find ourselves but in which we may find ourselves. I think there is a certain misconception of this idea of an appeal to the courts. This is a power to be exercised when the Secretary of State is satisfied that there has been systematic publication of matter which, in his opinion, is calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution to a successful issue of any war in which His Majesty is engaged. This is a power which can be exercised according to the political situation and circumstances in the country. If you have an appeal to the court, in the first place, placing on the court any business to place on the hands of this House of Commons, the Home Secretary's action in circumstances which the House may not feel was justified. If you have an appeal to the court, it becomes *sub judice*, and no one can talk about it. Supposing the court takes the view that the action was justified that precludes the House from questioning the action of the judge.

MAJOR MILNER. That surely is an argument for doing away with the Law Courts altogether.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL. No, the Law Courts deal with disputes between private individuals, to be decided on recognised principles of law. . . . No right of appeal is taken away by the new Regulation. The hon. Member, I think, agrees with that.

MR. SILVERMAN. No, I do not.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL. It is so. The right of appeal under 94A to the court, which is a limited right, will exist if action is taken under 94B. There is no power under 2C to suppress a newspaper at all. What 2C addresses itself to is quite

a different problem and does not in the least meet the situation with which my right hon Friend dealt. It in effect comes to this, that before you can prosecute a newspaper for fomenting matter the newspaper has to have a warning. It is not an action for suppressing a paper, but an action for seeing that it gets the warning before it can be prosecuted for producing matter of this kind. It takes no power to suppress a newspaper at all. The question the House has to consider is this. First of all, May such a power be necessary? On that my right hon Friend, I think, has satisfied the vast majority of the House. Secondly, assuming that such a power is necessary, is it appropriate to leave it to the courts of law to decide whether that Executive power has been properly or improperly exercised? What I am suggesting is that it is not a legal issue, but a political issue.

SIR GEORGE HUME (Greenwich) I have listened to the Attorney-General with a good deal of anxiety because the issue

place to criticise the action of a Minister is this House. I have always learned from constitutional history that we owe our liberties to the fact that the courts did act. They even put up the theory that the King could do no wrong in order that they could get at the Executive for acts done claiming them to be acts done under the order of the King. If the life and property of citizens of this

for the Executive, or for the House of Commons to get unbalanced. If there is panic or prejudice you should be able to go to a body which is not panicked and not prejudiced. I hope the Minister will consider the matter most seriously and not try to leave it to the House of Commons to have finally to decide on a matter so vital to private and individual interests.

MR VERNON BARTLETT (Bridgwater) It seems to me that some hon. Members are thinking on the long term lines of defending the rights of individuals which is a vitally important issue, and that others are thinking primarily of the immediate measures of defence in this country, another vitally important issue.

Both issues are equally important. The Home Secretary quite rightly has to take into consideration the question of what will happen in this country if an invasion occurs. With great respect, I suggest to him, with regard to this particular issue, that if an

invasion occurs there will not be time for an appeal any way, but if an invasion does not occur, surely after he has suppressed the offending newspaper it will be possible to devise some form of appeal. The idea of an appeal to the House of Commons seems to me to be extremely dangerous. But surely, we are close to a solution. The idea that there should be some form of appeal after a publication has been suppressed seems to be generally accepted. Might not one suggest that this point should be postponed until the possibility of an invasion, and to other hon. Members who are thinking of the vital importance of not losing the liberties of the individual.

SIR JOSEPH NALL (Manchester, Hulme) . . . I hope the Home Secretary will not give way on this matter. For a long time hon. Members have been bombarded through the post with most reprehensive publications containing subversive matter and every kind of disloyal statement, and this sort of thing has gone on

and defeatist matter that is being circulated, I do not know; but I hope he will. I hope he will get these Regulations through, and that those hon. Members who wish to see our war activities pursued without this constant attack from the publishers of subversive matter will support the Government on this occasion.

SIR HENRY FILDERS (Dumfries) . . . The Executive have taken powers one after the other to deal with property, banks, and everything else, and there is no check to giving them control over everything in the country, and yet the right to question the wisdom of these decisions will be withdrawn from us. If the Home Secretary is of the opinion that he does not like what is produced in a newspaper, he will have the right to fine a man hundreds of pounds, with the addition of seven years' imprisonment. These powers are a negation of all the liberties for which we have struggled in this country for so many years. . . . These matters are being placed outside the law, and we are placing powers of a sort which we are supposed to be fighting to stifle and destroy in the hands of individuals in the Government. . . .

MR EDMUND HARVEY (Corbined English Universities): I hope the Government will not fail to notice that the only hon. Member who has supported them is an hon. Member who has not been present throughout the whole of the discussion. On more than one occasion the Government have shown themselves willing to meet deutes that have been expressed from different sides of

the House . . . Would it not be possible for the Government to meet the essence of the very serious criticism which has been put before the House by undertaking to reconsider this matter and bring in the Regulation in a revised form which will take away the objections which have been pointed out by more than one speaker ? I am sure that it cannot be beyond the power of the learned Attorney-General to devise some way by which an appeal to law could be provided, not before the Minister acts but afterwards. I think that would satisfy the great majority of those who urged reconsideration of this matter so strongly on the Home Secretary. .

MR RALPH ETHERTON (Stretford) Surely, in his wisdom, the Home Secretary might reconsider the decision in this matter.

interfere in any way with the first and paramount objective of these Regulations. Surely, when one gives these wide and enormous powers to the Executive, with no check and no right of appeal, one is losing one's sense of proportion.

MR THURTLÉ (Shoreditch) I would not for the world cast the slightest reflection on the great profession of the law. I have a great admiration for the law, but I notice that there has been a great deal of unanimity among the lawyers, whose attitude is that if we have to choose between the law courts and the House of Commons, we should certainly choose the law courts. Well, to the cobbler it is always leather, and apparently to the lawyer there is nothing like the law. As a Member of the House of Commons, and as one who stands for the Parliamentary system on a great issue of public policy like this—that is the suppression of newspapers—I think the House of Commons is a far better tribunal of appeal than any court of law, and I hope the Home Secretary will stand firm.

MR SHINWELL (Seaham): . . . I cannot understand why there should be such reluctance on the part of the Attorney-General and the Home Secretary to refer matters of this kind to a court of appeal. Surely if we have to choose as between the House of Commons, however impartial it may regard itself, and however united it may be on certain issues, and an impartial judiciary, we would surely welcome the judiciary. . . .

I trust the House of Commons on certain issues, but when we have to choose in a panic situation, when it is not possible to take normal views, and at a time when we are faced by considerations which do not operate in peace time, between the House of Commons expressing its final view on the opinions expressed in certain

periodicals and the court of appeal, I would have no hesitation in saying that the court of appeal is by far the best

MR WILFRID ROBERTS (Cumberland Northern). I do not agree with the hon Member for Seaham (Mr Shinwell) because what I hoped to see was both an appeal to the courts and the possibility of raising the case in this House. If he made the concession of an appeal to the courts it would still not be impossible to raise the case in the House after that appeal had been heard. The appeal to the courts and the possibility of raising the matter in this House are two different things. The courts cannot give an opinion on whether it is right to suppress a paper or not. The courts can only say whether or not the Home Secretary has exceeded his powers as laid down in these Regulations. The Home Secretary may look as though he thought that was unimportant, but many of us feel that it is vitally important to put a check somewhere on the powers of the Home Secretary.

After all the real power conferred upon the Home Secretary in administering these Regulations lies in the threat that he will use them and not the fact that he does use them. That is a thing of which I am very suspicious.

If I understand the position rightly, what we are asking is that there should be a power of appeal over the Home Secretary's head as to whether he has exceeded his powers or not, and I cannot see why the Home Secretary cannot give us that concession . . .

The House divided Ayes, 60, Noes, 98

RESTRICTIVE REGULATIONS

23 July, 1940

MR LINDSAY asked the Prime Minister whether he is aware that the policy of the formation of silent columns of the regulation relating to the spreading of gloom and despondency, and the arbitrary arrest and release of British citizens is diminishing the bracing effects of his own speeches and broadcasts and belittling the loyalty and intelligence of the British people, and whether he will take suitable action in the matter?

MR CHURCHILL: Sir, the movement of forming silent columns was well meant in its endeavour to discourage loose and ill digested talk of a depressing character about the war. However, when this idea was put down in black and white it did not look by any means so attractive and seemed to suggest that reasonable and intelligent discussion about the war between loyal and well-disposed people ought not to take place. On the contrary, His Majesty's Government are glad that the general aspects of the war should be understood and discussed, provided that there is no

breach, however inadvertent, of official secrecy, no precise references to the strength and disposition of our Forces, and no talk about future operations. This movement to create a silent column has therefore, passed into what is called in the United States innocuous desuetude.

Upon the second part of my hon. Friend's Question I would observe that we have been and are still passing through a most

extremely repugnant to all our ideas and some of which might tend to encourage ill-natured tale-bearing and mutual suspicion in our midst. In the circumstances I have asked the Home Secretary to have every sentence imposed by the courts for loose or defeatist talk carefully and immediately reviewed and that it should be reduced or remitted wherever it is clear that there was no evil wish or systematic purpose to weaken the National Defence in the persons concerned. His Majesty's Government have no desire to make crimes out of silly vapourings which are best dealt with on the spur of the moment by verbal responses from the more robust members of the company. They desire only to curb as it is their duty to do propaganda of a persistent organised and defeatist character. As these sentences come to be revised and their revision is made public as it will be the courts all over the country will have a good guide furnished them as to what are the intentions of Parliament and the requirements of the State in respect of these war-time regulations.

SWINTON COMMITTEE

Labour and trades union officials, and does he approve of the prohibition—

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must confine his Supplementary Questions to the subject of the Question on the Paper and the answer. I cannot allow all these Questions to be asked.

MR. STRAUSS: May I ask this Question, which, I submit, arises directly out of the answer given by the Prime Minister, who went into some detail? May I ask him whether he approves of the prohibition which has gone out that no newspaper may mention this Committee without special permission?

THE PRIME MINISTER: Yes, Sir, and I am rather surprised that the hon. Gentleman persists in asking this Question. The Government have stated on their own responsibility that they do not think that it is in the public interest that this should be discussed.

MR. STRAUSS: Is the Prime Minister aware that there is very considerable public uneasiness about this matter?

15 August, 1940.

MR. MANDER asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that persons drawn from the ranks of the Conservative and Labour parties are members of the Swinton Committee, he will consider the advisability of appointing a Liberal?

MR. STOKES asked the Prime Minister whether he will give the names of all Members of this House who have been appointed to, or invited to, work with the Swinton Committee?

MR. ATTLEE: I will answer these Questions together. Perhaps my hon. Friends would be good enough to await the statement which my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister proposed to make at the end of Questions.

MR. MANDER: Is it proposed to deal with this particular Question which I have asked?

Later—

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL): I propose, with the permission of the House, to take advantage of the Questions of the hon. Members for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) and Ipswich (Mr. Stokes) about the work and composition of the Swinton Committee, to make a few general observations on the

subject. I submitted to the House some time ago the view that it was not in the public interest that Questions should be asked and answered about this Committee or other branches of Secret Service work, or about measures to deal with Fifth Column activities. It would be very wrong for a Government to plead the public interest as a reason for avoiding public and Parliamentary criticism and debate and personally I would never do so. I am always anxious to give the House of Commons the utmost possible information, and to welcome debate. Therefore

of Questions have been put upon the Paper day after day quite disregarding the request which the Government made. It would have been possible for the Government under the powers now and I am very sorry that in a few cases this attitude has not been forthcoming.

MR HOPKINSON With your permission Mr Speaker I am endeavouring to elucidate from the Prime Minister the reason why—

MR SPEAKER If the hon Member would ask a definite Question the Prime Minister would no doubt answer it Other- wise I cannot allow debate

MR HOPKINSON Why did the Prime Minister make such a mystery about it and refuse to give information which was perfectly harmless?

THE PRIME MINISTER If my hon Friend had paid half the attention to the full and very respectful statement which I have made to the House that he was accustomed to giving to obstructing my efforts to get this country properly defended before the war I would not have had to answer this Question at all

MR HOPKINSON I ask for your protection Mr Speaker, against this gross and lying innuendo?

HON MEMBERS Withdraw

MR HOPKINSON May I ask the right hon Gentleman to withdraw that statement? He is perfectly well aware that no man in this country has done more than I have

THE PRIME MINISTER Far from withdrawing what I said I will take the liberty of sending the hon Gentleman a copy of one of his interventions in Debate which I looked up only last night in which he did his utmost to discredit me when I was doing my utmost for the country

MR HOPKINSON I recently looked up the same thing myself and discovered that that intervention was justified up to the hilt

CAPTAIN BELLENGER On a point of Order We have the greatest faith in the Prime Minister but is it in order for the right hon Member who knows the customs of this House to make an attack on an hon Member who has no opportunity of replying?

MR SPEAKER The hon Gentleman took advantage of an occasion to which he was not entitled and that is how the trouble arose

MR STOKES Arising out of the Prime Minister's statement, may I ask whether he does not yet realise that the real

concern in the country is about the composition of the committee? Secondly, may I ask what conceivable public interest is hurt by our being told what Sir Joseph Ball and Mr Crocker are being paid? That information was refused last week, and it is quite unreasonable that we should not be told

THE PRIME MINISTER There would be no conceivable injury to the public interest in these two facts being known. I am entirely indifferent on that subject. But I think that if we are to have the Government cross questioned about this committee and Secret Service work and one point after another is brought out, and Members say, "Why did you not tell us that before?" that is a process which would be vitiating the measures of secrecy taken by the Government in this matter, and a right which is claimed by every other Government.

MR MAXTON The Prime Minister has stated that this all arose out of our doubts and fears after the Dutch happenings. Does he recognise that after the French happenings other doubts and fears began to arise? I accept, in general, what the right hon. Gentleman has said as to it being right and proper that Questions should not be put carelessly about things of this description but if we accept what he has asked us to do, and put upon ourselves a self denying ordinance not to ask Questions about this type of thing can he give us an answer to the old classical question, "Who watches the watchers?"

THE PRIME MINISTER The House watches the Prime Minister and the other Members of the Government and says whether it has or has not confidence in their general integrity and purpose, and then those Ministers and the Prime Minister watch the others to make sure that they keep up to the mark.

MR STOKES Will the Prime Minister tell us what Sir Joseph Ball and Mr Crocker are paid?

MR SPEAKER We cannot pursue this matter any further.

THE PRIME MINISTER The main purpose of my answer

should have thought that, having appealed to the House in this way, the Government might receive that consideration which they are entitled to claim.

MR A BEVAN On a point of Order. As notice was given a little while ago that this matter was to be raised on the Motion for the Adjournment, would it not assist—

MR SPEAKER This is not the Motion for the Adjournment

MR BEVAN Yes Sir but would it not be desirable that the atmosphere should be cleared up at this moment so as to avoid, if possible any further discussion? Is it not the fact that the right hon Gentleman has inadvertently missed the whole point of the criticism? No Questions have been put on the Order Paper, the answers to which would have injured the public interest [HON MEMBERS Oh!] The Prime Minister cannot point to any Question of that kind But there is widespread dissatisfaction in the country about the composition of this committee

MR STOKES I put a Question down about the payment of the members of this committee The Lord Privy Seal said that Lord Swinton and Mr Wall were paid nothing but that he was not prepared to tell us what Sir Joseph Ball and Mr Crocker were paid Now that we know that Lord Swinton and Mr Wall are not paid anything surely we are entitled to know what Sir Joseph Ball and Mr Crocker are paid

THE PRIME MINISTER That is covered by the very careful and lengthy answer which I have given At any rate that is the position which the Government take up

MR THURTLIE May I put this one point? Has it escaped the notice of the Prime Minister that many of the Members who are pressing this Question are rather luke warm about the prosecution of the war?

MR BEVAN On a point of Order Should not the hon Member who has made that statement make some distinction and indicate to whom he refers and is it not time that certain hon Members should cease to act as pimps of the Government?

MR THURTLIE May I ask you Mr Speaker whether it is in Order for an hon Member to apply a foul and offensive term to another Member?

MR BEVAN When the hon Member indicates the persons to whom he refers and defends his indication I will withdraw my remark

SIR WILLIAM DAVISON Is it desirable that at this critical time democracy should be made a laughing stock by such a frivolous attack upon the Prime Minister, whom the whole country desires to carry forward this nation to victory?

MR SPEAKER : I think it is time that this unedifying incident ceased

POLICE DOMICILIARY VISITS

19 September, 1940

MR G STRAUSS asked the Home Secretary whether he will take steps to stop the widespread searches that are being made in the houses of respectable citizens, and the removal of their books and papers without adequate excuse or reason?

SIR J ANDERSON : In time of war it is necessary that the police should be armed with wide powers of search, and, if there are grounds for suspecting some person of acts prejudicial to the public safety, the fact that he has hitherto enjoyed a good reputation is not a reason for refraining from inquiries, which must sometimes include a search of his premises and examination of his papers. Even if the result of the search is to negative the suspicions, it may be right that the search should have been made, if, in fact, there were grounds for such suspicion. In some cases it is not easy for the police to judge whether the information

me, I cause immediate inquiry to be made, with a view to satisfying myself whether the police had reasonable grounds for their action, and if my hon. Friends knows of cases which have not already been brought to my notice, I shall be glad if he will send me particulars. In fairness to the police it should, however, be said that, in many cases inquiry shows they are carrying out with discretion a task in which the avoidance of grounds for complaint is necessarily extremely difficult.

MR STRAUSS : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, in some of these searches, the police appear to behave quite unreasonably? They take away the minutes of local Labour parties, books written by Members of His Majesty's Government, and, on one occasion, a book written by John Stuart Mill.

SIR J ANDERSON : There have been cases into which I have made inquiry, and I have taken the action which seemed to be appropriate.

ALLIED FORCES BILL

21 August, 1940

THE JOINT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (SIR EDWARD GRIGG) : In his stirring review of the situation yesterday the Prime Minister said that although their countries had been overrun,

"the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians are still in the field, sword in hand, recognised by Great Britain and the

United States as the sole representative authorities and lawful Governments of their respective States”

He added that we have also recognised in General de Gaulle not a sovereign Government but an authority recognised as representing the feeling and faith of free Frenchmen outside occupied France. The object of the Bill is to enable those Governments to play the part which they desire to play in the war. They are not to be regarded as merely refugee Governments. Everyone of them wishes to share in the strain and sacrifice of the war as well as in the fruits of victory. Every one of them in some measure commands the means to play its part in the war. Some of these Governments command forces belonging to all three Services, the Navy, the Army and the Air Force, some have forces belonging to only one or two of those Services, but all of them command forces of some kind. We might have sought to absorb these military elements into our own services so that they would fight under the British flag.

We are not fighting for British freedom alone, and therefore we are not fighting for a purely British victory. We do not wish to dominate the Governments that are allied with us, either now or hereafter. We wish them to be our honoured partners in this enterprise, not only in winning the war but in building up a better Europe after the war. It is in that spirit and as a symbol of that aim that the Government is seeking, very gladly, to give legal sanction to the establishment of no less than six foreign Armies on British soil, to be trained under their own flags, under their own commanders, and under their own military law.

MR LIPSON (Cheltenham) Will the hon. Gentleman name the six?

SIR E. GRIGG: Poland, Norway, Belgium, Holland, France, and Czecho-Slovakia.

How will the command of these forces be provided for, in the course of operations, their disposition in this country, and so on? In principle, these foreign forces will be at all times under the British High Command in its character of the Allied High Command, but the forces will be used as far as possible as operational formations under the command of their own officers within that Higher British Command. Where necessary we are detailing British instructors to familiarise these forces with British material and British practice. The question of the command is also being dealt with in an article of the agreements which are to be signed.

I think that I have given a description of the main points in the Bill and I feel the House may very well be proud to pass it, because a new birth of freedom is implicit in it. It represents, I believe, the inmost aspirations of at least 100,000,000 human beings at present under the Nazi heel . . .

MR LEES SMITH (Keighley) The speech which has just been delivered by the Joint Under Secretary of State for War was very eloquent on the effects of the Bill. At the commencement of his speech he devoted some time to what is clearly the main problem which has to be settled before any Bill like this can be brought before this House. There was the alternative of taking these foreign forces and just lumping them into the British Army, without giving them any special national identity of their own.

It was essential that these foreign Governments after being invited to come to this country should have their own national armies here. These armies are the symbol of nationhood to millions of people and to their enslaved countrymen throughout Europe. I trust that when the time arrives to which the Prime Minister pointed yesterday and when there is a great resurgence in those countries these armies will be the spearhead of the Forces of liberation and will see them through their present perils and trials. So I accept the broad decision which the Government have made.

MR MANDER (Wolverhampton East) I am glad that the Government are taking steps to organise in one common unit the various Allied forces on our soil who are willing and anxious to play their part to the full in the struggle for liberty. We have been rather too much inclined in recent months to say in a way that is quite understandable 'We stand alone against the enemy.' It rather grates on some of our Allied friends who have if not vast armies on our soil great possessions at any rate in different parts of the world. We forget their feelings and it would be better if we were to go out of our way to emphasise that we are indeed not alone—that we have the physical and spiritual support of great nations and forces in different parts of the world—a fact which is receiving recognition in the Measure now before us.

I hope and believe that it will not be very long before the Emperor Haile Selassie is once again in his Dominions leading his people as part of an organised campaign rendering us the

definite Allies. Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, who no doubt for a very good reason are not very active in the military sphere at present but who are trusted Allies and who no doubt will be prepared in due course to play the part considered most suitable for them.

I should like to go still further. I believe that one of the finest things we can do in the way of friendship would be to make a whole-hearted treaty of alliance with republican China. There are portions of the British Empire where there are large numbers

of Chinese subjects, who would then come within the terms of the Bill

I have in the course of the years that have passed from time to time advocated in this House the formation of an international force, and it is therefore, a matter of very great interest, and of some satisfaction to me, to feel that, "under the disturbing events of this great war, such a force is now actually in being in this country, showing its practicability. The small armies of different countries in their separate national units are all willingly coming in under one supreme command. That is an example of the spirit in which we are all going into this struggle together, and I hope that it may be a forecast of the sort of system which we may see in the world after the war, when mankind will feel that it is its duty to join together and insist upon the maintenance of peace from one end of the world to the other.

MR LEWIS (Colchester) I should have thought that the practical advantages of some kind of foreign legion as part of the British Forces, in which all other nationals in this country, who wished to do so, could serve, would have been the better way of dealing with the problem. In practice, it will be a little difficult. We are only a small island, and now we are to have seven armies, seven navies, and, I presume, seven air forces, all under their own separate codes, and all working in this island. It does seem a little difficult, and there is the further practical drawback. There is no provision in this Bill whereby the German or the Austrian, oppressed by the Nazis and coming to this country full of hatred for them and longing to fight against them, can be included. From these points of view it might perhaps have been better if the Government had elected to proceed by way of a special unit or units in our own Forces rather than providing facilities for those foreign forces to be raised to work with us . . .

MR WEDGWOOD (Newcastle under-Lyme) . . . Let me bring the House back to the real critical point about the Bill. We must not pass it to day. We must get an assurance from the Poles that they will not use the powers of their Government to force into their army, as the only escape from internment, a large number of Jews who have learnt from bitter experience what it is to be under the Polish or the Nazi heel. Secondly, we should learn whether General de Gaulle is prepared to allow those who no longer wish to belong to his army, who are not French citizens by birth or by naturalisation, to leave. Finally, we may well regret that we have stuck to this ideal of its being a national war when it is really a religious war. . . .

MR SILVERMAN (Nelson and Colne) . . . We must not close our eyes to facts, even when they are unpleasant and embarrassing, and in what I am about to say I do not

wish to increase the awkwardness or the embarrassment; I mention the matter merely in order that there may be an opportunity of removing the awkwardness or embarrassment. Everybody knows that in Poland before the war there was a great deal of the most bitter anti-semitism. That is a fact beyond any kind of dispute; and I state it purely as a fact. . . . There are Polish forces in this country. I do not want to exaggerate and, for reasons which I am sure will be understood, I do not want to refer to details or incidents, but incidents have occurred, as the hon. Gentleman knows. I am certain that the Polish Government in this country do not approve of them or want them. I happen to know that quite recently General Sikorski issued, in the standing orders to his forces, instructions designed to combat anti-semitism, which would be ridiculous in Polish forces in this country at this time—

MR. WEDGWOOD: Or at any other time.

MR. SILVERMAN: Yes, but it would be in an even higher degree wrong for this House to lend support, legislative, financial, or any other kind, to forces that were willingly encouraging that kind of thing and allowing it to persist. I am not saying that the Polish Government are doing it. I am sure they are doing all they can to restrain it. I hope that that order will have some effect, and that it will be something more than a pious expression. The Government are in a position to make representations to those authorities where complaints can reasonably be made and

class citizens, and we ought not, in legislation, to give authority to other people who happen to be in this country to do things which, without this Bill, they could not do, unless we have some kind of assurance that they any more than we will not countenance any division in their ranks. . . .

SIR E. GRIGG: The right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for Colchester (Mr. Lewis) made a strong case for absorbing all these foreign fighting elements into our own Army rather than allowing them to form national forces of their own. I do not want to go into the military aspects of that question, and all I would say is that, after all, we are fighting for the freedom of these countries. We recognise their Governments as representative of free peoples, and if those Governments say that this is what they want who are we to deny it to them? Should we not be going against the very principle we are fighting for if we were to say, "No, much as you would like to have your own

forces we deny you the right to do so " ? We could not reasonably deny to a foreign Government on our soil the right which we have long conceded to the Dominions of the British Commonwealth. The right hon. Gentleman also raised the question of the treatment of Jews in the Polish Army and elsewhere. I will read to the House the terms of an order which was issued nearly three weeks ago by General Sikorski, the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish forces

The success of our arms and the establishment of our future national existence requires the co ordination of our efforts for our common aim. In particular, in the Army unity must be firmly established, honest brotherhood of arms must rule and all squabbles be eliminated. My principle is that a Pole who is now fighting for the common cause has thus given sufficient evidence that he is a Pole irrespective of his origin or religion. I strictly forbid to show to soldiers of Jewish faith any unfriendliness through contemptuous remarks or anything humiliating to human dignity. All such offences will be severely punished. This Order is to be read on parade to all soldiers "

MR SILVERMAN Everybody will recognise the extremely reasonable and even generous spirit of that order, but the effect of it is likely to be weakened when it is compared with such publications—I think the right hon. Gentleman will know what I mean—as we have had brought to our attention recently, Polish papers published in this country by people who are ostensibly members of General Sikorski's Government and, presumably, with the money which they have borrowed from us. They do not read at all like that order. I recognise that whereas one is a statement in a newspaper, the other is an order of the Commander-in-Chief, but we ought to be able to control the others, too.

SIR E GRIGG / We are engaged in negotiating agreements with these different Sovereign Governments, and we shall not be able to negotiate them until we have the legal power which Governments are not in this Bill becomes law in which those forces would be used in the field, and it is desirable that questions of command and everything else should be firmly established. It is for that reason that we ask that all remaining stages of the Bill should be taken now.

INTERNEES

9 July, 1940

MR. G STRAUSS asked the Minister of Shipping whether he has any statement to make about the loss of the *Arandora Star*, whether the ship was convoyed and had ample lifeboat provision, how many of the Germans on board were known to be Nazis and how many came to this country as refugees, when will he be able

to provide the friends and relatives in England with the names of the persons drowned, and whether it is proposed to send internees abroad without convoy?

MR SORENSEN asked the Minister of Shipping whether he will make a statement respecting the loss of the *Arandora Star*, whether the enemy aliens on board or lost included those who had received B or C certificates or were recognised as friendly aliens or enemies from Nazi oppression, whether those in these categories were compelled to sail, whether the available next of kin both of the British crew and the internees who were lost have now been informed, whether, in the event of large numbers of hostile Nazi or Fascist prisoners or internees being transported, he will see that any minority British crew is afforded the protection they deem necessary, and whether he will keep distinct and separate enemy aliens of pro- and anti-Nazi and Fascist sympathies?

MR CROSS In accordance with the usual practice in respect of fast ships the *Arandora Star* was not covoyed. Lifeboats and life rafts more than sufficient to accommodate all passengers and crew were provided. I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War that all the Germans on board were Nazi sympathisers and that none came to this country as refugees. None had Category B or C certificates or were recognised as friendly aliens. The Protecting Powers have been given lists of the missing passengers, in order that the next of kin may be informed. The owners have already taken steps to inform the next of kin of the crew who were lost. I am also informed by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War that adequate military guard was provided in the case of the *Arandora Star* and will be provided in future in other ships similarly used. Every endeavour will be made to separate enemy aliens of Nazi and Fascist sympathies from those of anti-Nazi and anti-Fascist sympathies. The Admiralty apply to these vessels the same rules as regards escort as to other British ships carrying passengers that is, the faster ones proceed independently and the slower ones in convoy.

13 August, 1940

MR MANDER asked the Prime Minister whether he will give particulars of the action taken by the Government with respect to the sending of refugees and internees overseas?

THE LORD PRIVY SEAL (MR ATTLEE) In view of the new strategic situation created by the enemy occupation of the Low Countries, Belgium and parts of Northern France, the Government came to the conclusion early in June that in the interests of national security it was desirable to transfer overseas a number

of the enemy aliens then in internment in this country. This was in order to reduce the general dangers which might arise if the enemy attempted to invade these islands, from having large numbers of enemy aliens concentrated in a comparatively small number of camps in different parts of the country. In pursuance of this policy some 9 120 Germans, Austrians and Italians were sent from internment camps in this country to Canada or Australia on various dates between 21 June and 10 July.

22 August, 1940

MR RHYS DAVIES (Westhoughton) It has been arranged that we shall to day discuss the problem of the internment of aliens in this country. We must recognise the difficulties of the Government in handling this very important question. It is no use dismissing it as though it were an easy one, because not only are we at war but there is a possibility of the invasion of this country, a possibility which has not passed away by any means. But I do really think that the House of Commons has a legitimate complaint against His Majesty's Government for the way in which they have dealt with the aliens' problem during the present war. In broad outline there are two types of aliens in this country. There is the alien who came here long before this war broke out, and indeed long before the last war. Some came here even before the South African War. A large number arrived later, when they fled from Nazi oppression. They not only fled from oppression in Germany, some fled from oppression in Italy as well.

Let me say in passing that the latter class were received here with open arms because they were opposed to Nazi tyranny. They were, in fact, elevated in the public mind here because they had dared to stand up against the tyrant in Germany and in Austria. About 60,000 or 70,000 people of that type arrived here, received, as I said, with open arms by everyone and, so far as I know, the Government put no obstacle in the way of their coming. Later on, unfortunately, our Government made no distinction between the two categories I have referred to. They bundled them all in together, suspect and innocent Jew and Gentile, educated and ignorant, loyal and disloyal on the assumption I suppose that because they were foreign born they must be enemies of our country.

Whilst I am satisfied that there was no cruel intention, the stupid part of it was that some of our alien population were put in exactly the same position as though there had been intentional cruelty. Doctors, physicians, scientists and some of the most eminent scholars in Europe have been put into camps and under restrictions. Men who were once Socialist Members of Parliament in Germany, and who suffered physical and mental agony because they stood up against the growing tyranny there, have also been

interned I do not know whether there is anything significant behind this fact

concentration camp, because this country has the prestige of giving asylum from time to time to victims of oppression. That is the gravamen of the charge that we are making to-day. It was not necessary that this internment policy should be carried out wholesale and without discrimination. First of all, the Government

A. B.:
need

when these categories were being dissected, one of the Departments came along, assisted by a great deal of criticism in the Press. The Press howled from one end of the country to the other "Intern the lot" . . . There were also voices in this House of Commons that spoke very nearly on the same lines. The Government succumbed, and interned the lot. Unless I am mistaken, some of the very newspapers then turned round, when those people were interned, and began to criticise the Government for having taken the very action they demanded. That is a lesson to us all not to follow the dictates of the newspapers.

It is strange how man's mentality works. We remember the horror that sprang up in this country when Hitler put Jews, Socialists and Communists into concentration camps. We were horrified at that, but somehow or other we almost took it for granted when we did the same thing to the same people. Of course, distance lends enchantment to the view, and *vice versa*. I have heard it suggested that there are some in authority in this country with Fascist tendencies and that that is the reason why some of the Jews have been put away. I do not believe a word of that. If I had to speak for this Government at any time, I would say that the reason why this has been done is really the fear of invasion.

Now let me come to the White Paper issued in July. The right hon. Gentleman ought to tell us to day what are the actual results of the publication of the White Paper. I know it is very easy to say, as some people do, that the White Paper and its results do not mean anything beyond the fact that the administration has released from internment those persons who never should have been put inside at all. That is the argument—that sick people were put inside who should never have gone, and that all the White Paper has done so far is to rectify those mistakes. I shall be glad if he can tell us to day how many persons in fact have been released from internment camps since the issue of the White

Paper I have a feeling that in that Paper there is something a little too mundane and materialistic. I think there is a paragraph which says, "If these people on release can be of service to the national cause we will let them out." That smells a little too much of Hitlerism for me. These men should be let out of the internment camps because they are innocent and not because they are useful. That is the test. I am not one of those who think that a person ought to be allowed to go free during a war, if there is the slightest doubt about him. When, however, a man is interned and put under lock and key he ought to be charged with his offence. The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head and I will leave the point there.

There is another complaint. Imagine all these people doing nothing. I do not know what the cost of maintenance is, but then we do not bother about the cost of anything now. But we have to remember that the families of these people who are interned will come on to public funds. This brings me to another very serious point. How on earth the Government conceived the idea of sending some of these people to Canada and Australia is beyond my comprehension. The agony of the families in this connection is indescribable. Imagine the plight of a mother of whom I know with two sons. She has not the remotest idea where they are, but she presumes that they have been sent to Australia. But then something else has happened. When many of these men were sent to Australia their wives were asked, "Are you prepared to follow them?" The wives said that they did not mind going to internment camps in Australia if they could join their husbands. Of course, the women sold their homes and bought the necessary clothes with the proceeds, and when they were ready to go with all their luggage, labels and everything written out, word came along to cancel the whole thing. I know of one woman who has had to turn to public relief because she has nothing left for her maintenance. There are in this House business men and employers of labour conducting affairs on a large scale, and I am sure that if any manager of any firm ran his private business on those lines he would be dismissed his post right away.

MAJOR CAZALET (Chippenham) I hope that neither false sentiment nor false emotion will govern anything I say. Rather I am animated, if I may say so, by a sense of decency and of due regard to the fair name of both my country and the Government that I support to day.

We all know that what has been done has not been done deliberately, with a desire to be cruel, in order to propitiate the sadistic instincts of officials. Exactly the opposite is the case. Officials have been more than sympathetic. Why is it that something has not happened? I am afraid it is because of sheer incompetence and mismanagement. I have no desire to ask for punishment, but I desire to see that similar things may not happen

in the future. Of course, there has been exaggeration, but I would say, in extenuation of some of the exaggeration of which perhaps too Members of this House have been guilty—how can you expect that there will not be exaggeration when it has taken over three weeks to get a letter from one party to another—[An Hon. Member: "Longer than that"]—a month in one case that I know of, when the "Oxford Book of English Verse" has been decreed an unsuitable book for a refugee, when names have been lost, when people have disappeared? It is obvious that when those things occur you are bound to get an atmosphere in which exaggeration of statements will take place. I know that the Minister is the first to admit that mistakes have been made, and I know that neither he nor his Department is responsible. But I do not think that that is quite enough. Horrible tragedies unnecessary and undeserved lie at the door of somebody, and I want the Minister, if he will, to say that he realises that these mistakes which he has admitted have in certain cases resulted in appalling and most regrettable tragedies. We have, unwittingly I know, added to the sum total of misery caused by this war, and by doing so we have not in any way added to the efficiency of our war effort.

I know that the Under-Secretary has visited various of these camps, and I believe that conditions in the great majority of

Heath and Sutton Park Camps, saying that men of 65 and 67 are still living under canvas. I do not know whether that is true or not, but if the Under-Secretary has visited these camps and is satisfied, either that the conditions are good, or that they are to be speedily changed, I accept the position at once. But it is only right in a Debate of this kind, when we all receive these letters, that an answer should be given.

There must be individual cases which are not to-day, and will never be, covered by any particular category in any White Paper. I want no refugee to be refused the right of being released simply because he does not come under any particular category. I want there to be an individual committee, or whatever body it may be, who will examine the request of an individual on its merits. We all know, in the individual cases which have been brought to our notice, how hard it is to put them in any particular category. There is always some exceptional case. Let us get the categories working, and get out as many people as possible, but, as time goes on, surely, there must be another criteria. Innocence, loyalty, honesty—these must be the deciding factors.

I say, let such a man out. Give him his liberty to join with us in fighting for that freedom for which he might have been fighting for many years already. I ask the Minister to recognise that speed is of the essence of the whole problem. Frankly, I shall not feel happy, either as an Englishman or as a supporter of this Government until this bespattered page of our history has been cleaned up and rewritten.

EARL WINTERTON (Horsham and Worthing) . . . I have been for two years the British Government representative and chairman of the Evian Committee, without whose existence a large number of these refugees would never have got out of Germany at all. I have attended conferences in Paris, and at Washington under the chairmanship of the President of the United States of America, and I have, in a comparatively small house in London, nine refugees—seven Belgian and two German Jewish refugees—so that I hope I shall not be accused of approaching the subject with a natural bias of unfriendliness towards refugees. I am not attacking the Government's policy, I am in favour of it, and I say deliberately that the right hon. Gentleman is carrying out with great courage and efficiency the dictates and policy of the whole Government. It has been constantly asked in Debate

again in the countries on the Continent which were invaded by Germany it was found that refugees aided Nazis in their march. The whole proof is there for anyone to see. Anyone who listened to the broadcasts of one of our Ministers in one of those countries has that proof.

Now I would like to mention another point—I am convinced that cases did occur where Germans said to refugees, "We are going to give you and your people a much worse time, but we will give you the opportunity, if you like, of going to other countries providing you will help us in any way you can." No mesh, however small, in the police system of any country could possibly prevent that, and when people talk about the provable loyalty of people from Germany, such a thing is a contradiction in terms, and almost impossible to prove.

I will now tell the House something for which I take full responsibility. Perhaps I got the information not in a proper way. It has never been made public, and I propose to make it public now. The wholesale internment of aliens resulted largely from public pressure inside and outside the House. Whether it was right or wrong, it was done, but my postbag was full of letters from people who said, "We are sorry for these people who have come from Germany, but we are more concerned with the safety of our State." The statement I wish to make is that after these people were interned there was much less leakage of information from this country to the Continent than before they

were interned. If I got up before any public meeting of constituents in this country and asked, 'Which do you put first, the safety, honour and welfare of this realm, or the interests of foreigners, however badly treated?' there would be one shout in reply, "England".

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT

ment of aliens is not a question involving only the interest of some thousands or tens of thousands of individuals but a matter which touches the good name of this country.

I made a statement on 4 September, at the outbreak of the war, on the subject of the treatment of aliens particularly enemy aliens, and I enunciated what I think can fairly be described as a liberal policy. It was a policy which took full account—this was its basic feature—of the importance of distinguishing refugees from Nazi oppression from other categories of enemy aliens.

The machinery was put into operation and the work completed within a comparatively short time and, as a result, the vast majority of the enemy aliens—those who were of enemy alien nationality as a matter of law and national status—were placed in category C, which meant that they were to be regarded as aliens friendly to this country, the vast majority of them being in fact refugees from Nazi oppression. My statement on 4 September was a statement of policy which gave me personally the greatest satisfaction. I thought it was in accordance with the best traditions of the country. It was with the very greatest reluctance and regret that I departed from the policy which I enunciated, a policy which at the time commanded the approval of Members in all parts of the House and the support of public opinion outside.

How did we come to depart from that policy? It was a matter of military necessity. The first significant step was taken on 11 May, after Norway had been overrun and when the attack had already been launched on Holland and Belgium. The military authorities came to me, late one evening, and represented that, in view of the imminent risk of invasion, it was in their view of the utmost importance that every male enemy alien between 16 and 70 should be removed forthwith from the coastal strip which in their view was the part of the country likely, if invasion took place, to be affected. I listened to the representations of the military authorities and came to the conclusion that it was quite impossible

I explained how deeply I regretted the necessity for the step. Hon. Members might like to look back at the Press of Monday, 13 May—I saw the representatives on the Saturday—and see the

line that was taken then. The hon. Member for Westhoughton was challenged in various quarters when he said the Press with one voice called for the internment of all enemy aliens. I think perhaps he put it a bit high. But there was not a responsible newspaper on 13 May who did not applaud what had been done.

MR WEDGWOOD It was not internment.

SIR J ANDERSON It was the internment of every enemy alien between 16 and 70 years of age at that time in a certain coastal strip. Three thousand were then interned. I do not want to be controversial. I want only to make the position as clear as I can, not in my interest or in the interest of the Home Office or the Government, but in the interest of the country, so that, as far as possible, we may get rid of misapprehension. There was not a single newspaper that did not accept the policy, and some asked, "Why need the Home Secretary come here and apologise; why does he not do more?" That was the attitude at that time, and it was reflected in the House. My postbag was full of letters urging me to go further. I held back because I wanted to go only so far as real military necessity might dictate. But the enemy's march was rapid. As I have said, the first step was taken on 11 May. Then there was the collapse of France, profoundly altering the military problems which confront us in this country. On 21 June, after the fullest and most earnest consideration, the policy of general internment was decided upon.

It is not altogether easy to present the complete case for the action that was taken, because there are considerations which it would not be in the public interest to set out fully in public Debate, but I think I can make sufficiently clear the kind of considerations we had to weigh. We are thinking now only of the very large category of technical enemy aliens who have been classified as friendly—the "C" category—aliens who have a perfectly clean record and about whom nothing adverse is known. The question is why cannot they be left at liberty? Can we be sure that in the 60,000 "C" category aliens there is not a proportion—it may be a small proportion—who are enemy agents deliberately introduced by a very determined and resourceful enemy? I cannot answer that question in the affirmative.

The next point is, is it not the case that a fair proportion of those friendly aliens still have friends and relations in Germany, still have material interests in Germany, and as a result might be subject to pressure which would lead them, perhaps at the hour of our greatest peril, to take action, on an impulse it may be, which afterwards they might greatly regret? Further, is it not the case that these enemy aliens include quite a large number who, perhaps because of the experience they have gone through, are fundamentally defeatist, who, if it appeared that the enemy was making progress in an attempt to land on our shores or by

parachute, would lose heart would be a source of weakness and would tend to lower the morale of the people around them and might be tempted in the last resort to try to make terms? If it is impossible for the Home Secretary or any responsible authority to give a satisfactory answer to those questions what is to be done?

I will pass now to the White Paper, because I think there are misapprehensions about it. The White Paper was never intended to set out a complete policy of alleviation. It was published in accordance with pledges given in this House merely as a record of the instructions which had been given to the police in the last stage of carrying out a policy of general internment. When I told the House that the White Paper was to be published I also gave details of the arrangements which were being made to ensure that as far as possible the categories of people who were to be regarded as eligible for relief might be extended. That is I hope only the beginning. Within the limit of a policy of general internment, which for the time being must be maintained I hope that substantial numbers of people will be released. My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Chippenham (Major Cazalet) referred to the Pioneer Corps. I hope that an opportunity will be afforded to all young men *prima facie* eligible to join the Pioneer Corps. I have a poster with me which is being put up in the camps explaining to men between the ages of 19 and 50 what they should do if they desire to apply.

*There is one matter which I know has exercised the minds of hon. Members a good deal. The policy of general internment, as has been pointed out more than once inevitably resulted in the internment of some of the bitterest and most active enemies of the Nazi regime. Our difficulty there has been to invent some test to decide the genuineness of the alleged hostility or opposition to that regime if possible some objective test. At my request the Asquith Committee have given careful consideration to that matter and on the recommendation of the committee I have decided to adopt a new category in the following terms:

Any person as to whom a tribunal appointed by the Secretary of State for the purpose reports that enough is known of his history to show that by his writings or speeches or political or official activities he has consistently over a period of years taken a public and prominent part in opposition to the Nazi system and is actively friendly towards the Allied cause

I propose to appoint without delay a suitable tribunal for this purpose

MR G. STRAUSS (Lambeth North) Will there be a number of tribunals?

pected of agreeing with Mussolini or Hitler? To say that everybody who has expressed views which we now regard with abhorrence should now be interned is inconceivable.

The argument in favour of locking these people up must be based on their being dangerous and that is what the Noble Lord who generally represents the most extreme Conservative views in this House explained. If they are dangerous in the first place, how is it that under one of the categories those people who occupy key positions are to be released? The sort of arguments which are put forward in defence of this policy are quite illogical. If they are dangerous, keep them in; if they are not dangerous, let them out; and if you do not know whether they are dangerous or not, put them in key positions where they are able to do any amount of damage! Consider those who are left out who may be a little more dangerous. There is Prince Stahremberg, an Austrian, an expert aeronautist, who uses his machine to run away whenever there is danger. You leave him in the key position of driving one of our aeroplanes with our money. He apparently is not dangerous enough to intern. I should have said that there are a great many people in the Fascist movement in high positions who are far more dangerous than many of the people who are interned.

If you, Sir, were enlisting members of the Secret Service—which of course is in no way one of your functions—in order to obtain a clear insight of what was going on in Germany, would you send to that country people who talked but imperfectly the German language? Nearly all these aliens, although some of them have been here for about six years, speak such English that in many cases I cannot understand them. Nobody would ever mistake a refugee for anybody but an alien. Even if Hitler loved the Jews, he would not employ such incompetent spies and agents. Still less would he employ them in conjunction with the Nazis in this country, his real agents. Incompetent as spies, hostile by every instinct they have, knowing full well that whatever we lost by a German victory they would lose far more, there is one body of people in this country who are essentially safe so far as hating Hitler is concerned, safe so far as protecting this country from invasion is concerned.

MR. PICKTHORN (Cambridge University) The part of the subject to which I wish to draw particular attention, because—I have not my notes and papers here—it is the part which I have best in my head, is in connection with the *Arandora Star*.

The main point that I want to make about the *Arandora Star* is that, on the day after the sinking, we were told by the Minister of Shipping, who described himself as authorised by the Secretary of State for War to tell us that there were no Germans in the *Arandora Star* who were not known to be Nazi sympathisers. It seems to me to be a case of very gross incompetence that that announcement should have been made. But to announce categorically that there were none seemed to be a quite unforgivable

piece of administration, the more so, when one comes to inquire into some of the individual cases concerned.

I could give a very long list of some of the people I know very well, many are intimate friends of mine, for whom I have as much personal affection as I have for my own relatives. There was one case, that of a man of the utmost scientific distinction who was doing work, in connection with war wounds, which nobody else in the world can do. The War Office I suppose, sent him off to Canada two or three days before the Home Office decided that he might be immediately released without a stain on his character.

I can tell the House of the case of a young man whose father was murdered by the Nazis and whose mother and young sisters became naturalised in this country. He himself was not naturalised owing to a series of technical accidents. He had done his best to get into combatant service before the war started, and he was a person of great academic distinction, for whom every sort of guarantee could be found. Again he was one of the people who was sent overseas. I could quote 12 or 15 cases from my own personal knowledge, as I have no doubt could many other Members in this House, but I do not want to do that. All I want to do is to indicate these cases in order to show that I have as much profound sympathy with the human cause as any hon. Gentleman here. But I also have profound detestation of the administrative incompetence which I think undoubtedly there has been. I can see no reasonable grounds for criticising general policy, and if I may say so as an insignificant speaker from the back benches, I think the Secretary of State this afternoon made an admirable speech and an extremely strong case. I think that he was unjustly treated when he was accused—because in this House it is an accusation—from the Front Bench opposite of being a good advocate. I think the goodness of his case was not so much because of his advocacy as in the plain statement that there was fundamental consideration of the problem. . .

SM RICHARD ACLAND (Barnstaple) I hope that some of us are quite mistaken in thinking that the Home Secretary's words may mean that it is only the rather prominent anti-Nazi workers and writers who are to be released. I hope that the humble trade union secretaries and trade union members are also to be released. Indeed, I am sure that must be so, but if it is so, then the Home Secretary must realise that he will be confronted with a flood of applications for release on this ground, and his machinery must be capable of dealing with those applications. It seems to me to be inevitable that he must have more than one

that the people who are put on the tribunals will be anti Nazi in that sense. Might I also suggest that the proceedings before the tribunals could very usefully be held in the German language whenever possible?

But I greatly fear that, in spite of all the categories, great numbers of innocent people will be kept in internment throughout the whole of the war because they cannot prove their innocence. There is one thing I want to ask. Recently, I asked the Prime Minister at Question Time whether he would establish a German university in this country. When I put my question to the Prime Minister, he replied "Oh no we have other things to do". Does not the Prime Minister suppose that Hitler has something on his mind at the moment? Yet Hitler has time to establish an independent Breton university to allow Breton culture to flourish in Brittany at this time. And so we have the extraordinary position that the enemy of culture is able to pose as its friend. Cannot we do something to redress the balance with these Germans who are now in our midst?

Now I wish to come to my main point. It is impossible for all the things that have happened to be just to dismiss all these things as mistakes and to talk about mistakes and muddle. It is far too big for that. What I am about to say is perhaps not true of all camps, but it comes from internees and friends of internees, and, although one incident or another may be an exaggeration, the sum total of what one hears represents a picture which is too black to be dismissed with, "Oh it was a mistake". It has gone on too long. There is I think a theoretical standard of feeding which these refugees are supposed to have. I have heard from too many refugees that they have only two pieces of bread with marmalade for breakfast, soup and potatoes for lunch, and a little bread and cheese for tea. That may be more than some of our own people are getting, but it is a great deal less than we give to German prisoners of war who come to us as our enemies.

This is a terrible indictment against the Government.

Thousands of C cases have been deported to Canada and Australia and nobody has any idea of what is to happen to them. I would like to know whether it is true that when it was found there were only a few prisoners of war the Government decided to send B and C cases? Who decided that C category aliens should be put on the ships? That is not a thing that happens by accident. It is not the responsibility of a camp commandant. Was it decided by the Home Secretary? If so, he must bear the responsibility. Was it decided by the War Office? If so, they must bear the responsibility. Was it decided by some civil servant acting without authority? If so, we ought to know.

Finally, we have the case of Sutton Coldfield. Does not that case utterly destroy all the assurances which Ministers give us or can give us on this matter? Who gave the order to send several hundred people, mainly over 50, to this marshy, heathery,

"mosquito-3" swamp, where there was absolutely nothing for them except tents and ground sheets—no mattresses—and where they had to march for about 14 miles, many carrying their belongings, because somebody did not know that buses had been sent to meet them at the station or because they had gone to the wrong station? Who was responsible for that? Did the Home Secretary order these people to go to Sutton Coldfield? If not, who did? . . .

These things do not happen because of the weather or because of some inevitable incident. In the first week or two or the first three or four weeks after a sudden change of policy—and we are not challenging that—one can plead emergency, muddle or difficulties, but one cannot go on pleading that. Somebody or other has either willed that those things should happen or has not willed that they should stop, and in fairness to the Home Secretary we must know whether it was he, because if so he must bear the responsibility. If it was not he, who was it? . . .

MR. PEAKE (UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT)

Members who have had an opportunity of investigating conditions in the last week or two will agree that those conditions have enormously improved, and that the letters which described conditions in the early part of July are now quite irrelevant. On 5 August we found two camps of a temporary character which were internment camps. One is Sutton Coldfield and the other is Prees Heath. Sutton Coldfield is extremely unsatisfactory, and we have arranged to vacate it to-morrow. Prees Heath will similarly be evacuated at as early a date as we can arrange for alternative accommodation. This problem is a serious one. We hope that we shall be able to find additional accommodation. We hope to get by the end of September additional accommodation in the Isle of Man. We also hope that as a result of the policy which we are pursuing the internee population will steadily diminish. There are three channels which, I think, will rapidly achieve some diminution in the internee population. They are these. First of all, the releases under the categories laid down in the White Paper. The Home Secretary gave the figures so far announced, and with the lowering of the age to 65 there will obviously be a substantial number who will qualify for immediate release. In the second place, we hope that very substantial numbers will be recruited in the next few weeks for the Pioneer Corps. I have always thought myself that it is quite impossible to justify having young men of alien origin hanging about with nothing much to do—perhaps young artists, young pianists or young lawyers or something of that sort, when British boys are being taken away from their families to serve overseas. . . . There is a third channel by which the internee population will be rapidly diminished, and that is emigration overseas. As a result of the situation in the war it is now obviously impossible for emigrants to go from Germany to the United States. It follows from that,

that as we are starting a new quota year for immigration into the United States the chances of persons of German and Austrian origin in this country to day of securing visas for the United States will be very greatly enhanced

I want to say a word about the transfer overseas which took place in the months of June and early July. The detailed arrangements in regard to these shipments with the exception of the last one to Australia for which the Home Office had a joint responsibility were made by the War Office but I want to persuade hon. Members if I can that there was a very substantial number of internees in the camps in Categories B and C who were willing and indeed anxious to go to the Dominions owing to the situation in which they found themselves. As regards shipment to Australia which is the only shipment for which the Home Office is directly responsible there is perfectly conclusive evidence that 90 per cent. of those who went there were anxious to go there. The Australian authorities have informed us that a considerable number of those who are on their way are those whom they have been refusing to admit for many years past.

I am most anxious for the welfare of these people. I am most anxious to get on with an improvement in general policy and anxious to get many of them released as speedily as possible.

I have not had time to cover all the ground. It is little more than a fortnight since the Home Office took over this responsibility for the management and control of the camps. We took it over with a headquarters staff which had to be improvised in two or three weeks in order that there should be unified control in regard to alien policy. Much has already been done by the military authorities. We get the most remarkable tributes from internees themselves to the efforts made on their behalf by the staff of the camps concerned. I should like to read this one from a large internment camp in the Isle of Man.

No effort has been spared by the command of the camp to obviate these difficulties. The British officers attached to the camp have strained the rules to the utmost in our favour and perhaps even overstepped them sometimes for the sake of humanity. There is not one amongst us who will not remember them in days to come with lasting gratitude.

The Home Office has a tradition for humanity in handling the aliens question and I can assure hon. Members that we shall try to be worthy of it.

CHAPTER V

BLITZKRIEG

20 August, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL) Almost a year has passed since the war began and it is natural for us, I think to pause on our journey at this milestone and survey the dark, wide

field. It is also useful to compare the first year of this second war against German aggression with its forerunner a quarter of a century ago. Although this war is in fact only a continuation of the last, very great differences in its character are apparent. In the last war millions of men fought by hurling masses of steel at one another. "Men and shells" was the cry, and prodigious slaughter was the consequence. In this war nothing of this kind has yet appeared. It is a conflict of strategy, of organisation of technical apparatus, of science, mechanics and morale. The British casualties in the first 12 months of the Great War amounted to 365,000. In this war, I am thankful to say, British killed, wounded, prisoners and missing including civilians, do not exceed 92,000, and of these a large proportion are alive as prisoners of war. Looking more widely around, one may say that throughout all Europe for one man killed or wounded in the first year perhaps five were killed or wounded in 1914-15.

The slaughter is but a fraction, but the consequences to the belligerents have been even more deadly. We have seen great countries with powerful armies dashed out of coherent existence in a few weeks. We have seen the French Republic and the renowned French Army beaten into complete and total submission with less than the casualties which they suffered in any one of half a dozen of the battles of 1914-18. The entire body—it might almost seem at times the soul—of France has succumbed to physical effects incomparably less terrible than those which were sustained with fortitude and undaunted will power 25 years ago. Although up to the present the loss of life has been mercifully diminished, the decisions reached in the course of the struggle are even more profound upon the fate of nations than anything that has ever happened since barbaric times. Moves are made upon the scientific and strategic boards, advantages are gained by mechanical means, as a result of which scores of millions of men become incapable of further resistance, or judge themselves incapable of further resistance, and a fearful game of chess proceeds from check to mate by which the unhappy players seem to be inexorably bound.

There is another more obvious difference from 1914. The whole of the warring nations are engaged, not only soldiers, but the entire population, men, women and children. The fronts are everywhere. The trenches are dug in the towns and streets. Every village is fortified. Every road is barred. The front line runs through the factories. The workmen are soldiers with different weapons but the same courage. These are great and distinctive changes from what many of us saw in the struggle of a quarter of a century ago. There seems to be every reason to believe that this new kind of war is well suited to the genius and the resources of the British nation and the world. ~~once we get properly equipped and properly started, a war of~~ kind will be more favourable to us than the sombre mass of the Somme and Passchendaele. If it is a case of

all its arsenals and vast masses of military material converted or convertible to the enemy's use, a puppet Government set up at Vichy which may at any moment be forced to become our foe, the whole Western seaboard of Europe from the North Cape to the Spanish frontier in German hands, all the ports, all the air-fields in this immense front, employed against us as potential springboards of invasion. Moreover, the German air power, numerically so far outstripping ours, has been brought so close to our Island that what we used to dread greatly has come to pass and the hostile bombers not only reach our shores in a few minutes and from many directions, but can be escorted by their fighting aircraft. Why, Sir, if we had been confronted at the beginning of May with such a prospect, it would have seemed incredible that at the end of a period of horror and disaster, or at this point in a period of horror and disaster, we should stand erect, sure of ourselves, masters of our fate and with the conviction of final victory burning unquenchable in our hearts. Few would have believed we could survive, none would have believed that we should to-day not only feel stronger but should actually be stronger than we have ever been before.

Let us see what has happened on the other side of the scales. The British nation and the British Empire finding themselves alone, stood undismayed against disaster. No one flinched or wavered, nay, some who formerly thought of peace, now think only of war. Our people are united and resolved, as they have never been before. Death and ruin have become small things compared with the shame of defeat or failure in duty. We cannot tell what lies ahead. It may be that even greater ordeals lie before us. We shall face whatever is coming to us. We are sure of ourselves and of our cause and here then is the supreme fact which has emerged in these months of trial.

Meanwhile, we have not only fortified our hearts but our Island. We have rearmed and rebuilt our armies in a degree which would have been deemed impossible a few months ago. We have ferried across the Atlantic, in the month of July, thanks to our friends over there, an immense mass of munitions of all kinds, cannon, rifles, machine-guns, cartridges and shell, all safely loaded without the loss of a gun or a round. The output of our own factories, working as they have never worked before, has poured forth to the troops. The whole British Army is at home. More than 2,000,000 determined men have rifles and bayonets in their hands to night and three-quarters of them are in regular military formations. We have never had armies like this in our Island in time of war. The whole Island bristles against invaders, from the sea or from the air. As I explained to the House in the *midst of June*, the stronger our Army at home, the larger must the invading expedition be, and the larger the invading expedition, the less difficult will be the task of the Navy in detecting its assembly and in intercepting and destroying it on passage; and the greater also would be the difficulty of feeding and supplying

the invaders if ever they landed in the teeth of continuous naval and air attack on their communications. All this is classical and venerable doctrine. As in Nelson's day, the maxim holds, "Our first line of defence is the enemy's ports." Now air reconnaissance and photography have brought to an old principle a new and potent aid.

Our Navy is far stronger than it was at the beginning of the war. The great flow of new construction set on foot at the outbreak, is now beginning to come in. We hope our friends across the ocean will send us a *timely reinforcement to bridge the gap between the peace flotillas of 1939, and the war flotillas of 1941*. There is no difficulty in sending such aid. The seas and oceans are open. The U boats are contained. The magnetic mine is, up to the present time, effectively mastered. The merchant tonnage under the British flag, after a year of unlimited U-boat war, after eight months of intensive mining attack, is larger than when we began. We have, in addition, under our control at least 4,000,000 tons of shipping from the captive countries which has taken refuge here or in the harbours of the Empire. Our stocks of food of all kinds are far more abundant than in the days of peace and a large and growing programme of food production is on foot.

Why do I say all this? Not assuredly to boast, not assuredly to give the slightest countenance to complacency. The dangers we face are still enormous, but so are our advantages and resources. I recount them because the people have a right to know that there are solid grounds for the confidence which we feel, and that we have good reason to believe ourselves capable, as I said in a very dark hour two months ago, of *continuing the war "if necessary alone, if necessary for years"*. I say it also because the fact that the British Empire stands invincible and that Nazidom is still being resisted, will kindle again the spark of hope in the breasts of hundreds of millions of down-trodden or despairing men and women throughout Europe, and far beyond its bounds, and that from these sparks there will presently come a cleansing and devouring flame.

The great air battle which has been in progress over this Island for the last few weeks has recently attained a high intensity. It is too soon to attempt to assign limits either to its scale or to its duration. We must certainly expect that greater efforts will be made by the enemy than any he has so far put forth. Hostile air-fields are still being developed in France and the Low Countries, and the movement of squadrons and material for attacking us is still proceeding. It is quite plain that Herr Hitler could not admit defeat in his air attack on Great Britain without sustaining most serious injury. If after all his boastings and blood-curdling threats and lurid accounts trumpeted round the world of the damage he has inflicted, *of the vast numbers of our Air Force he has shot down*, so he says, with so little loss to himself, if after tales of the panic-stricken British crouched in their holes cursing

the plutocratic Parliament which has led them to such a plight, if after all this his whole air onslaught were forced after a while tamely to peter out, the Fuhrer's reputation for veracity of statement might be seriously impugned. We may be sure, therefore, that he will continue as long as he has the strength to do so, and as long as any preoccupations he may have in respect of the Russian Air Force allow him to do so.

On the other hand the conditions and course of the fighting have so far been favourable to us. I told the House two months ago that whereas in France our fighter aircraft were wont to inflict a loss of two or three to one upon the Germans, and in the fighting at Dunkirk, which was a kind of no man's land, a loss of about three or four to one, we expected that in an attack on this Island we should achieve a larger ratio. This has certainly come true. It must also be remembered that all the enemy machines and pilots which are shot down over our Island, or over the seas which surround it are either destroyed or captured, whereas a considerable proportion of our machines, and also of our pilots, are saved, and soon again in many cases come into action.

A vast and admirable system of salvage, directed by the Ministry of Aircraft Production, ensures the speediest return to the fighting line of damaged machines and the most provident and speedy use of all the spare parts and material. At the same time the splendid nay, astounding increase in the output and repair of British aircraft and engines which Lord Beaverbrook has achieved by a genius of organisation and drive, which looks like magic, has given us overflowing reserves of every type of aircraft, and an ever mounting stream of production both in quantity and quality. The enemy is, of course, far more numerous than we are. But our new production already, as I am advised, largely exceeds his, and the American production is only just beginning to flow in. It is a fact, as I see from my daily returns, that our bomber and fighter strength now, after all this fighting are larger than they have ever been. We hope, we believe that we shall be able to continue the air struggle indefinitely and as long as the enemy pleases and the longer it continues the more rapid will be our approach, first towards that parity, and then into that superiority in the air, upon which in a large measure the decision of the war depends.

The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few. All hearts go out to the fighter pilots, whose brilliant actions we see with our own eyes day after day, but we must never forget that all the time, night after night, month after month, our bomber squadrons travel far into Germany, find their targets in the darkness by the highest navigational skill, aim their

attacks, often under the heaviest fire, often with serious loss, with deliberate careful discrimination, and inflict shattering blows upon the whole of the technical and war-making structure of the Nazi power. On no part of the Royal Air Force does the weight of the war fall more heavily than on the daylight bombers who will play an invaluable part in the case of invasion and whose unflinching zeal it has been necessary in the meanwhile on numerous occasions to restrain.

We are able to verify the results of bombing military targets in Germany, not only by reports which reach us through many sources, but also, of course, by photography. I have no hesitation in saying that this process of bombing the military industries and communications of Germany and the air bases and storage depots from which we are attacked, which process will continue upon an ever-increasing scale until the end of the war, and may in another year attain dimensions hitherto undreamed of, affords one at least of the most certain, if not the shortest of all the roads to victory. Even if the Nazi legions stood triumphant on the Black Sea, or indeed upon the Caspian, even if Hitler was at the gates of India, it would profit him nothing if at the same time the entire economic and scientific apparatus of German war power lay shattered and pulverised at home.

The fact that the invasion of this Island upon a large scale has become a far more difficult operation with every week that has passed since we saved our Army at Dunkirk, and our very great preponderance of sea power enable us to turn our eyes and to turn our strength increasingly towards the Mediterranean and against that other enemy whom without the slightest provocation, coldly and deliberately, for greed and gain stabbed France in the back in the moment of her agony, and is now marching against us in Africa. The defection of France has, of course, been deeply damaging to our position in what is called, somewhat oddly, the Middle East. In the defence of Somaliland, for instance, we had counted upon strong French forces attacking the Italians from Jibuti. We had counted also upon the use of the French naval and air bases in the Mediterranean, and particularly upon the North African shore. We had counted upon the French Fleet. Even though metropolitan France was temporarily overrun, there was no reason why the French Navy, substantial parts of the French Army, the French Air Force and the French Empire overseas should not have continued the struggle at our side.

Shielded by overwhelming sea-power, possessed of invaluable

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here to the end it would also have been their duty, as I indicated in my speech of 4 June, to provide as far as possible for the Naval security of Canada and our Dominions and to make sure they had the means to carry on the struggle from beyond the oceans. Most of the other countries that have been overrun by Germany for the time being have persevered valiantly and faithfully. The Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the Dutch, the Belgians are still in the field, sword in hand, recognised by Great Britain and the United States as the sole representative authorities and lawful Governments of their respective States.

That France alone should lie prostrate at this moment, is the crime, not of a great and noble nation, but of what are called "the men of Vichy." We have profound sympathy with the French people. Our old comradeship with France is not dead. In General de Gaulle and his gallant band, that comradeship takes an effective form. These free Frenchmen have been condemned to death by Vichy, but the day will come, as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow, when their names will be held in honour, and their names will be graven in stone in the streets and villages of a France restored in a liberated Europe to its full freedom and its ancient fame. But this conviction which I feel of the future cannot affect the immediate problems which confront us in the Mediterranean and in Africa. It had been decided some

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were attacked by all the Italian troops, nearly two divisions, which had formerly faced the French at Jibuti, it was right to withdraw our detachments virtually intact, for action elsewhere. Far larger operations no doubt impend in the Middle East theatre, and I shall certainly not attempt to discuss or prophesy about their probable course. We have large armies and many means of reinforcing them. We have the complete sea command of the Eastern Mediterranean. We intend to do our best to give a good account of ourselves, and to discharge faithfully and resolutely all our obligations and duties in that quarter of the world. More than that I do not think the House would wish me to say at the present time.

A good many people have written to me to ask me to make on this occasion a fuller statement of our war aims, and of the kind of peace we wish to make after the war, than is contained in the very considerable declaration which was made early in the Autumn. Since then we have made common cause with Norway, Holland and Belgium. We have recognised the Czech Government of Dr. Benes, and we have told General de Gaulle that our success will carry with it the restoration of France. I do not think it would be wise at this moment, while the battle rages and the war is still perhaps only in its earlier stage, to embark upon elaborate speculations about the future shape which should be given to Europe or the new securities which must be arranged to

spare mankind the miseries of a third World War. The ground is not new, it has been frequently traversed and explored, and many ideas are held about it in common by all good men, and all free men. But before we can undertake the task of rebuilding we have not only 'to be convinced ourselves, but we have to convince all other countries that the Nazi tyranny is going to be finally broken. The right to guide the course of world history is the noblest prize of victory. We are still toiling up the hill, we have not yet reached the crestline of it, we cannot survey the landscape or even imagine what its condition will be when that longed-for morning comes. The task which lies before us immediately is at once more practical, more simple and more stern. I hope—indeed I pray—that we shall not be found unworthy of our victory if after toil and tribulation it is granted to us. For the rest, we have to gain the victory. That is our task.

There is, however, one direction in which we can see a little more clearly ahead. We have to think not only for ourselves but for the lasting security of the cause and principles for which we are fighting and of the long future of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Some months ago we came to the conclusion that the interests of the United States and of the British Empire both required that the United States should have facilities for the naval and air defence of the Western hemisphere against the

ment of the United States that we would be glad to place such defence facilities at their disposal by leasing suitable sites in our Transatlantic possessions for their greater security against the unmeasured dangers of the future. The principle of association of interests for common purposes between Great Britain and the United States had developed even before the war. Various agreements had been reached about certain small islands in the Pacific Ocean which had become important as air fuelling points. In all this line of thought we found ourselves in very close harmony with the Government of Canada.

Presently we learned that anxiety was also felt in the United States about the air and naval defence of their Atlantic seaboard, and President Roosevelt has recently made it clear that he would like to discuss with us, and with the Dominion of Canada and with Newfoundland, the development of American naval and air facilities in Newfoundland and in the West Indies. There is, of course, no question of any transference of sovereignty—that has never been suggested—or of any action being taken without the consent or against the wishes of the various Colonies concerned, but for our part, His Majesty's Government are entirely willing to accord defence facilities to the United States on a 99 years' leasehold basis, and we feel sure that our interests no less than theirs, and the interests of the Colonies themselves and of Canada

and Newfoundland will be served thereby. These are important steps. Undoubtedly this process means that these two great organisations of the English speaking democracies, the British Empire and the United States, will have to be somewhat mixed up together in some of their affairs for mutual and general advantage. For my own part, looking out upon the future, I do not view the process with any misgivings. I could not stop it if I wished—no one can stop it. Like the Mississippi, it just keeps rolling along. Let it roll. Let it roll on full flood, inexorable, irresistible, to broader lands and better days.

MR LEES-SMITH (Keighley). The speech of the Prime Minister is apt to turn the rest of the Debate into an anti-climax. He has spoken for a united nation, and he has spoken in the name of free men in every country in the world. He has announced two very far reaching decisions which I merely mention, because it is not necessary, in view of the spirit of the House, to enter into any discussion in regard to them. He has announced the decision that we shall not flinch in exercising the full strength of our blockade, and he has announced the decision that we shall afford to the United States full facilities for acquiring the bases she needs for the security of her nation. Both these decisions represent decisions of a united nation, and public debate in the House of Commons gives an opportunity to state that fact . . .

The Prime Minister uttered one sentence which I should like to use as a text bearing on certain results appearing from this air battle. He said that this war is a conflict between totalitarian uniformity on one side and tolerance and variety on the other. I think what has happened in the last eight days is a very good test of the different military results of the two systems . . .

Every now and then I listen to broadcasts from German stations, and a few nights ago their claim was this, that the size of their Air Force is so many multiples greater than the size of ours that, if they go on and on—and as the Prime Minister said, it is the German temperament to press things to the end—they will not stop, that is not their method of warfare—then finally, whatever their losses they will be able to destroy our Air Force and have some surplus at the end, and that even though it were a small surplus it would give them the mastery of the air. That was the prospect, but, as the Prime Minister has pointed out, that prospect has been, I presume, completely falsified, all their calculations have been falsified, by, as he said, the astounding increase in our machines during the new Administration which was brought into being as the result of the last public debate in this House upon the war. That indicates to me that this House is not only the most ~~valued body in times of peace but the most formidable engine~~ of war, far more formidable than the Nazi system; and this House will see this war through as, for hundreds of years, it has seen the wars of this country through to success . . .

If Herr Hitler does not beat us by physical invasion in the next

month there is no doubt he will turn to the other alternative, which to many people has always seemed a good deal more dangerous, the alternative of trying to defeat us by his blockade, trying to defeat us by sinking our merchant ships. The figures there are not as satisfactory as the figures of the air war.

We overcame the submarine menace some months ago, but at

pointed out, the ports of France are now at the disposal of Germany. Brest and others lie to the west of Plymouth, and we cannot meet the submarines from those ports as they go out. They can go out to the west of the Irish Coast where, I imagine, most of these sinkings must be taking place. I think it is worth while pointing out to neutral nations what we are paying for our principles. Why cannot we deal with those sinkings off the Coast of

realise what we are paying for our principles. There is no doubt of what Herr Hitler would do under those conditions, and the world can now see the spectacle of this country watching every month scores of ocean merchant ships being sunk and thousands of British seamen drowned, because the Navy cannot use ports within our own Commonwealth, the ports of Ireland, which but for the Navy would be where Belgium, Holland and Denmark are now.

The Prime Minister spoke of the Mediterranean, and the Eastern Mediterranean in particular. It is clear that that is a vital theatre of war. I therefore say that I welcomed the Prime Minister's statement that large armies and means of reinforcement are at present in the Eastern Mediterranean and that we intend to discharge our obligations. It is obvious that one of the great prizes of the war waits either for the Axis Powers or for ourselves.

There are two features relating to our machinery to which I take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Prime Minister. He appointed a committee to inquire into certain aspects of our Secret Service and Intelligence Departments. It would be well if he probed more deeply into the Secret Service and the Intelli-

as the weakest of the arms with which we are fighting this war. It is well worth considering whether the Secret Service should not

be handed over to another Minister Lord Beaverbrook has been mentioned. There is a Member of this House sitting on an opposite bench now who, I think, would be better attuned to meet Nazi methods than Lord Halifax or Lord Swinton. I make that suggestion.

I have one other suggestion to make. I am getting the view that we have no machinery for what I would call long-distance strategy and planning as distinct from the task of grappling with the immediate difficulties of the war. The chiefs of staff, and the Cabinet have no time for this long-distance work. I believe that, from time to time, certain officers are appointed and told to concentrate upon something, but I am told also that, after a short time, they are roped in, owing to the urgency of the general problems of the day, and then there is no machinery for the purpose for which they were appointed. We are now talking of the war continuing until 1941 or 1942, and we must form some picture of what the course of it is likely to be. Preparations for the future involve commitments, and preparations for months and perhaps for a year ahead. There is this defect in our machinery, and I should like to see it closely considered.

SIR PERCY HARRIS (Bethnal Green, South West). I think we should exploit to a greater extent the degree of help which we are receiving from our Allies in Europe and in the New World, and particularly from our own Dominions. They have come to our aid from all parts of the globe. They have given us, too, from their supplies of food and raw materials, and they still have immense productive power which has not yet been fully exploited. That applies equally to India which has vast resources in men and war materials yet to be fully used in a war in which India has a material interest.

In the last war the help given by the Dominions were expressed in the existence of the Imperial War Council. I expected that something of that kind would be brought into being in the early months of this war.

MR. HORE-BELISHA (Devonport). No more formidable this or in any other war, By repelling so frequently fighter pilots have indeed definitely checked the unbroken sequence of Hitlerian victories, and have disproved the legend of Hitler's invincibility. At the same time, our bomber pilots have been doing most effective work over a widespread area, and we have learned this afternoon that our production is such as to entitle us to the hope that, within a measurable time, we shall enjoy command of the air. Throughout this war, by endurance and sacrifice, our Navy has maintained command of the seas. Will it be sufficient, for us, however, when we have supremacy in both these elements? I think not.

My right hon. Friend spoke so encouragingly of the future that

one was almost compelled to forget the slight reverse which we have had in *British Somaliland*. It is as well to face the position candidly. The Italian victory is part of a great design. It brings to our enemy certain advantages although one must not exaggerate them. It cuts off Jibuti from us on the landward side—and we might need at some future date to advance up the railway to Addis Ababa. It removes to a greater region of improbability the long awaited Abyssinian revolt and blunts the sword which we held into one of the Italian flanks. Undoubtedly the defection of the French has placed us in a difficult position. The difficulty of that position arises chiefly on land. Therefore I hope that the Government are planning to create a large army—very much larger than we should have found adequate if the French had remained in the conflict. We must have a striking force not only to recover what we have lost but to hit the enemy at a convenient time on European territory. That army must be equipped in a way which embodies all the lessons of our recent experience. In particular it ought to have its own air arm.

The creation of an army depends upon supply. We cannot hope to defeat the authoritarian powers who are waging total war and who have the whole of their populations mobilised unless we rapidly mobilise ourselves. They have great armies, they have great air forces and they have expanding fleets. In addition, they have kept their industrial organisations concentrated on the war effort. We are not doing that. There is no time to lose. You cannot win a war with 800,000 unemployed. The winning of a war is a conscious process. You must reduce the manufacture of goods which are not necessary, and turn over your production to the war effort. It is no use relying on appeals. You have to do that as a deliberate act. People speak as if you could maintain an export trade in an unlimited manner. Surely your export trade must be kept at as low a level as is compatible—in addition to your other resources—with paying for the goods you must import. The whole of your industrial machine must be concentrated primarily on the war effort. We must act quickly and we must obtain as many friends as we can by our diplomacy. Diplomacy is as essential a part of war as are armies, navies and air forces. We cannot claim in this war to have won many friends. However, what my right hon. Friend has said about our new relations with America atones for many diplomatic omissions. If that should lead to the same kind of relationship as we hoped for in the case of France and to eventual common citizenship the evils of this war will have been almost worth while.

MR BELLENGER (Bassetlaw). I say without fear of contradiction that the forces that we had in this country up to the time when the campaign was started in May were not adequately trained. The amount of training which was done in this country during the eight months preceding the campaign in May was ludicrously small compared with the forces that were mobilised

We are approaching another winter, and it would be a tremendous mistake if we allowed our Army, which has reached considerable numbers, to slip back into the apathy which was widespread—let the House mark this—among commanding officers, high commanders and men during the last winter.

I am glad to hear from the Secretary of State for War that he is utilising the experiences of junior officers who have come close to the enemy and have experienced enemy tactics and have even countered enemy tactics with home-made methods. We cannot entirely rely upon the professional soldier to win the war for us. It is a civilian Army in the main that we have now mobilised, and why should not more of the good brains which were very successful in peace time in various businesses be utilised in the higher circles of command? The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War knows very well the difficulty of men of that calibre rising even to the rank of a battalion commander. Every hon. Member of this House will know that it is on the battalion commanders that the Army really depends. If you have bad battalion commanders, any amount of brilliant Staff work will not bring victory. We want a combination of the two—good Staff work and good regimental commanders. If you can get them—and I believe you can, if you search for them in a much wider field than has hitherto been done—I believe that we shall have some chance of victory . . .

LIEUT.-COLONEL MOORE-BRABAZON (Wallasey): . . . I think the speech from the Prime Minister this afternoon will give to the whole country great encouragement because there were hints lying in that speech of future initiative and enterprise abroad. I wanted to say a word about Lord Beaverbrook. I have some knowledge of the difficulties inside the Air Ministry and supply therein, and I think he deserves the greatest praise from this House and the whole country. The way he has cut through red tape and "got a hustle on" is really quite extraordinary. There is no doubt about it that when you hurry to the future by long range planning you have to pay for it, but still the defence of this country was of paramount importance, and he has played a valiant part in that. We have to remember that we now have split the Air Department into two parts. There are the Air Ministry and the Ministry of Aircraft Production. How are they getting on together? We are told that the production of the aircraft is to be stupendous in the near future and even more so in the New Year. How is training getting on? I hear that in the early spring personnel will be behind production, and there is this point that I want to press upon the Secretary of State for Air. I ask him not to think it is possible to train in this country the vast number of pilots we must get. It is absolutely impossible. I have no doubt that some aerodromes have been chosen outside this country, but all initial training must take place outside Great Britain.

MR COCKS (Brixton) . . . This is the first time since the invasion of Holland and Belgium, and the fall of France, that the House has been given an opportunity to take a survey of the war situation. I welcome that opportunity. I am glad the Government have given it to us, because surely to day more than ever, far more than when the words were first written, we are "the one voice in Europe, and we must speak." We must speak freely and frankly to the world. We must speak to France, to Spain, to Russia, to Japan and to America. To Germany we shall only speak with guns. To the people of France we speak with sorrow and sympathy. They have been broken by treachery and betrayed by corrupt and faithless leaders. But the soul of France is not dead and can never die. The French people, who once showed "a light to all men" and "preach'd a gospel all men's good," will one day with our help, and perhaps before long rise against the persecutors and betrayers and proclaim again to the world the triumphant principles of the French Revolution.

In the meantime German anti-British propaganda is being carried out effectively amongst the French people. Every effort is being made to sow the seeds of discord and with propaganda of a most insidious nature. It is not had

many successes to its credit in recent years, and I hope that no tenderness in that quarter for Marshal Pétain or General Weygand or any fear of the possible consequences of a popular rising in France will deter the Government from appealing to the democratic instincts of the French people and supporting General de Gaulle in his efforts to place the real responsibility for the surrender and collapse of France on the shoulders of the vultures of Vichy.

Now I will say a word about Italy. I view with some concern the attitude which has been adopted, since the war started, by the Foreign Office towards Italy. One of the greatest mistakes of the war, in my view, is the fact that we did not send an ultimatum to Mussolini to tell him that, unless he gave us concrete pledges that he would remain neutral, he would be subject to immediate attack. I believe that if this had been done, and he had chosen the second alternative, Italy would have been knocked out long ago, France might still have been fighting and Somaliland would still be ours, and why are we dithering about Abyssinia? A successful revolt in Abyssinia might disconcert the Italian designs—and they are formidable designs—in the Middle East. Why did we not promise the Abyssinians their independence and help them to rebel? The Government have been asked to do this, and this is their reply.

"His Majesty's Government have let it be known that, in view of Italy's act of deliberate aggression in resorting to war against this country, they feel entitled to reserve complete liberty of action in regard to any commitments entered into in the past with the Italian Government

relating to the North and East African and Mediterranean areas. This declaration covered the *de jure* recognition under the Anglo Italian Agreement of 1938 of Italy's conquest of Abyssinia.

We ask for a clarion call to the Abyssinian people, and all we get is the muffled muttering of mealy mouthed mediocrity.

Now I should like to turn to Spain. Here again is a delicate situation which I will endeavour to deal with delicately. Here the Prime Minister is reaping the tares sown by past politics, an agricultural proceeding of which he himself had considerable doubt at the time. Spain at present under Nazi influence has ceased to be neutral and has become non belligerent, as Italy did a few months ago. The pressure of the Axis upon General Franco's Government is increasing. Anti British propaganda in Spain has been increased and it is said that General Franco has voiced the desire for the return of Gibraltar. It is rumoured, it was stated in *The Times* yesterday, that Spain may enter the war on the opposite side to us. In these circumstances I hope that no futile policy of attempted appeasement will be pursued by our Ambassador.

What might have been done under British leadership is now being done under Nazi leadership. Germany very anxious not to impede the flow of food and raw materials from the Balkans to the Reich by any conflict in that area has used her influence to try to bring about a Hungarian-Bulgarian-Rumanian agreement. Negotiations are now proceeding and certain concessions are to be made by Rumania both to Hungary and Bulgaria. The effect of that agreement will be to weaken very considerably the position of Yugo Slavia and Greece. It goes without saying that, if Greece is attacked by Italy we shall come to her assistance, and I hope Turkey will do the same, because an Italian conquest of Greece would make the position in the Near East one of extreme danger.

I have no illusions about Russian policy. I have not any delusions either. Russian policy is dictated entirely by self-interest, and she is not the only country of which that can be said. The Russian Government have no love for us, and they have no love for Germany either. Once the tide begins to turn and it is seen that we are getting the upper hand, there will be some hope of the Soviet Union coming into the conflict and helping us to bring the war to a swifter conclusion. In the meantime there is no need

thing this time. I trust that the negotiations for a trade agreement will be pressed forward as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, we ought to cultivate the most amicable relations possible with Russia although I have no doubt that Lord Halifax, who has visited Hitler and Goering, has noted in Russia—but he has now gone to Moscow to accomplish this

I want now to go further East, to Japan. Here again the Prime Minister is the unfortunate inheritor of a policy which he never supported and never approved. If the amiable and ineffective gentleman who now adorns the Woolsack had been promoted to that high position eight years ago, he would not be faced with the present grave situation. The Prime Minister has been deavoursing to stave off.

There will be widespread approval for the suggestion that certain places in our Dominions and Crown Colonies might be leased to the United States for a term of years for the construction of naval and air bases. All these proposals, signs of the voluntary coming together of free peoples like the offer of unity which was made to France, are in striking contrast to the designs of Nazi Germany.

CAPTAIN DUNCAN (Kensington North). With regard to Abyssinia, it seemed to me all right that the British Government should announce officially that Haile Selassie had reached Khartoum, but they lacked imagination when they left him there and said nothing since officially or unofficially of his movements. If we are to run a propaganda war—and we should whether through the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Information I do not mind—let us run it in a thoroughly Machiavellian manner. In future, if further operations are undertaken we ought to have rumours, not official Foreign Office statements about Haile Selassie and his army leaders popping up all over the place in Kenya or South-West Abyssinia or perhaps in Kassala—in disguise. . . .

... or only in Abyssinia, but in many other parts of the world. . . . should get rid of pre-war Foreign Office methods and while being strictly correct and truthful in their official statements should propagate any amount of rumour which will be to the detriment of the enemy.

The only other subject I wish to discuss is one raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Devonport (Mr. Hore-Belisha). A stage has been reached in the war this week in which, as the right hon. Gentleman said, we now know that we can stand up to the Germans in the air. That stage having been reached I think we can say that the time has arrived to consider a counter-offensive and we may hear The . . . are the

Government doing about it?

MR. VERNON BARTLETT (Bridgwater): . . . This Debate has been remarkable because from the Prime Minister's speech onwards we have had the first evidences of an offensive spirit.

has justly earned great praise, but there are other matters in which there has begun to appear again the same element of absence of positiveness the same element of indecision, which led to some of us voting against the last Administration in a critical Debate, and it is right that this should be said at the end of a week when we rightly think that we have won a great victory against our enemies abroad

Let us take the question of finance. We listened to a Budget announcement of great length and great ability, but on both sides of the House a note of criticism came from the Front Bench opposite and from the speakers on this side who supported the Government. There did seem to be in the mind of some of us a complete conviction that the fundamental problem was not being dealt with at all—that the Budget was not a Budget designed to meet the long range problems which we had to confront at a time when it was very important that we should do so.

Then I come to a more delicate matter, as to which I must tread even more warily—the question of the Army. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War has appointed a Committee to go into the organisation of the War Office. A great deal has been said about the Army. One thing demands to be said at the outset. The men are splendid, and the officers are determined to do their duty, any criticism levelled either at the men, the N.C.Os. or the officers at any rate in my experience, has not been justified. But again things are not all they should be. In the first place it is an undoubted fact that if you compare the morale of the Air Force, the Navy and the Army at the moment, the morale of the Army is not as high as that of the other two.

MR. OWEN EVANS (Cardigan).—On what grounds does the hon. Gentleman say that the morale of the Army is not as high as that of the Air Force?

MR. HOGG.—I know it is true. I am in the Force and I have seen it fairly extensively. I know that the men as a whole do not say as the Air Force boys say or the Navy boys say, 'We are absolutely the best of the three.'

MR. MCKIE.—Has the hon. Gentleman made an extensive canvass?

MR. HOGG.—No, but I have my ears and eyes open, and I know what my brother officers say. I am not grumbling at all, but I am saying what the House had better know, because it is true. Now that is not as it should be, and it is something which could be put right easily.

The serving officer and the serving man have a grievance. There is no delegation of authority where there should be delega-

tion of authority. There is no trusting them with money, when they should be trusted with money. These things clog up the machine, and when they happen the best men in the world will not get a move on. It is time that these things were said by someone who does not care a farthing what happens to him personally.

COLONEL ARTHUR EVANS When the hon. Member challenges the morale of a Force, the suggestion is that he challenges the fighting morale of that Force.

MR HOGG I never challenged the fighting morale of the Force. What I said was that the officers and N.C.O.s and men all did their duty. It is a complete misrepresentation of my remarks to say that I had suggested anything of the kind which the hon. and gallant Member alleges. One is always accused of vile, unwarrantable things when one says such things as I have said.

REAR-ADMIRAL BEANISH I would ask the hon. and gallant Member how he has arrived at the rank of captain after nine months' service.

MR HOGG Happily, it was not I who promoted myself. If someone else wants to promote me, it is well within his power to do so. I do not care what rank I hold if I can serve my country in the sphere in which it is thought that I should serve. That sort of suggestion ought not to be made. I want to put the matter simply, plainly, in a few words. The Prime Minister commands my undivided loyalty, but there are signs that this Government are losing their first wind, that many of their supporters are people of such complacency that they cannot allow criticism to be uttered. That must not go on. There is one great and significant division in this country at the moment. It is the division between youth and age. For my part, I would rather stand with those who are my contemporaries as well as my compatriots.

MR STOKES (Ipswich) While I accept that it is impossible to talk about peace until the Germans have been shown that they are not invincible, I cannot understand why it is considered not a propitious time to make a widely-drawn declaration of our aims.

If my postbag is any guide, and I take it that it is some expression of opinion throughout the country, there is a clear demand that there should be a wide declaration of our peace aims. Surely you can hold out some hope to our friends in Europe who, according to the Ministry of Economic Warfare, will suffer the most appalling privation of famine and plague.

each and everyone that we were completely neglecting the most modern and one of the most efficient war weapons. On this score alone the United States output could be vastly increased. The Senator said that if we could only influence public opinion through the radio to a greater extent it would be possible for America to grant many of the things we are now denied. You may guess what I meant. It assists the President to do more and justifies what he has already done.

The æther is a colonial world where channels are the Colonies. When Clive was reproached for his interest in India it was because in those days England did not understand the importance of India. We smile when we think of it. But to day England does not understand the value of the æther colonial world. There are still colonies to occupy. England rules the waves but Germany rules the æther waves.

The technique which has been used by Germany in invading the various conquered countries is by advance occupation by radio. In war radio has become the advanced cavalry of occupation.

There are two or three things which can be done and should be done. We should create in Great Britain a great number of freedom stations. That is a term which I will explain. When a country is conquered and its broadcasting stations are conquered there is no reason why another broadcasting station should not be established across the Channel—manned preferably by the nationals of the conquered country, and if possible with the actual operators of the old stations.

It is most important to give moral support to the people who are still in the conquered country and it is not nearly so expensive to give moral support as to give physical support. Broadcasting is very cheap, it does not cost much more than about £60 an hour and it does not risk the life of one man. Freedom stations

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inhabitants of the occupied countries are not good enough. It is important to create an audience. I have had a certain amount of experience in creating audiences from one country to another, and it is impossible to create a large audience to a broadcasting station unless you broadcast for at least three or four hours in the language of the country concerned. Supposing I were to tell hon. Members that to morrow the Norwegian station at Oslo would broadcast every day for 15 minutes in English. Is there anyone here who would tune in regularly to that particular 15 minutes?

It is said that we should pass to the offensive. We cannot stage an offensive on the sea because the Italians stay in harbour. We cannot stage an offensive in the air because we have not sufficient biplanes and we cannot yet stage an offensive on the land.

But we could certainly stage at once an offensive on the æther platform. We have the means of doing it and we could establish the necessary stations. If the position were reversed, if we disposed of 170 stations and the Germans had only 16 stations, think of the superiority we could possess over them, with their internal dissension, their occupied countries, their various races . . .

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AIR (SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR). . . . My right hon. Friend the Member for South-West Bethnal Green (Sir P. Harris) raised the question of Imperial representation in the War Cabinet. I think it is the wish and judgment of Parliament that so far as possible the size of the War Cabinet should be kept small. How far it is possible to keep down the size of the War Cabinet must be a matter for the Prime Minister's judgment, but I think it would be difficult to include in the War Cabinet representatives of all the Dominions of the Crown. If it be said, "Then choose one," I would point out that it would be difficult to make the choice.

We have an admirable method of associating, as my right hon. Friend wished us to associate, the Dominions with the decisions and with the framing of policy on which the War Cabinet proceeds. We have here from the Dominions men of standing and influence in their own country, men who are well known here in London, and they are in the closest association with Ministers and hear from the Secretary of State for the Dominions, who is present at nearly all important Cabinet meetings, all that is passing in the War Cabinet. We have also our own High Commissioners in the Dominions. In these ways the closest association is maintained between the Government here in the United Kingdom and the Governments of the various Dominions.

The Prime Minister in his great speech this afternoon gave the House good, sound reasons for confidence in the situation in which the country finds itself now, and for confidence in the future, but he warned us that greater ordeals might well lie ahead of us. I think he said that this was not a time to boast. Since the very beginning of war, since even before the war, I have frequently referred to this war as a gigantic and hazardous undertaking. And it is a hazardous undertaking on which we are engaged. But, looking back over the last three months, it does seem to me that there are sure grounds of confidence in the future. What strikes me, looking back over that period is, first of all, the power of the British Navy, which is not only unbroken but is a greater menace to Germany than it was at the beginning of the war. There is the proficiency and the dogged fighting spirit of the British Army, as shown in the epic struggle outside Dunkirk, there is the superb prowess and audacity of the pilots and fighting crews of the Royal Air Force . . .

The House may wish to know roughly what the result of recent fighting has been. Certainly the truth bears no to the German claims. I cannot help thinking . . .

lying that Hitler and Goebbels do must defeat its own ends before long. I noticed the other day that they had been giving out an account of the number of warships that we had lost, and if the German claims had been true the British Navy would now have consisted of four submarines, 63 destroyers, *minus* three aircraft carriers, *minus* 21 cruisers, and *minus* 17 battleships. They certainly put up a wonderful defence of our coasts. So, if the German claims in the air battles which have been going on over the country had been true, I should have had to tell the House that we had lost no fewer than 878 aircraft. All I can say is that I should not have looked quite so confident and cheerful as I think I do now, if that had been the position of affairs. I certainly could not have made the statement I made just now, that our front line is thicker than before these operations began.

Let me now give the House the true figures. Our gunners and other ground defences, including the machine gunners—and the Royal Air Force are always particularly glad to note the successes of the gunners and the searchlights, because the co-operation between us is very close and we take pride in each other's achievements—have now shot down 55 German aircraft since 8 August. Including the 55 aircraft shot down by the ground defence system, the whole system of defence has, mainly, of course, through the prowess of our fighter pilots, accounted

aircraft

But if one takes the comparable figures for losses of pilots and crews, they are still more remarkable. Taking the fighter pilots alone, casualties in the air over this country and over the sea round our coast have been 90 of our fighter pilots since 8 August, against more than 1,500 of the pilots and crews of the German fighters and bombers. If one includes bomber crews which we have lost over Germany, our figure of losses is much less than 300, and the German figure of losses is as I have said, a great deal over 1,500. These are conservative figures, because, of course, the figures I have given of our losses are confirmed, whereas the figures I have given of the German losses take no account of the very substantial number which our pilots are convinced they have shot down, but which they have not seen actually break up in the air or crash on the ground or on the sea, and the considerable number of other German aircraft which have gone away in a condition in which our pilots did not think they would be able to get home to their bases . . .

We are fighting a conspiracy of two gangsters, both Germany and Italy, against the liberties of Europe and the decencies, restraints and moral values of our civilisation. I do not know why the hon. Member for Broxtowe (Mr. Cocks) thinks that we have any weakness or sensitiveness towards the Italian Fascists.

I can assure him that we are hitting them as hard as we can and that we shall continue to do so; but we have no quarrel with the peoples of Germany and Italy. We shall never use our powers in the air as an instrument of mass terrorism. Our blows are, and will continue to be, directed against the enemy's aerodromes, aircraft factories, aero-engine factories, and other centres of his military industry and supply. But wherever the instruments of cruelty and oppression are forged, wherever the materials of war are made and converted into munitions, wherever there are factories or oil storage plants, refineries, aircraft factories, air-engine factories, there the strong arm of the Royal Air Force will reach out, and is reaching out this very night, and there we shall break the fetters with which Hitler seeks to bind the peoples of Europe.

AIR-RAID PRECAUTIONS.

9 October, 1940

MR AMMON (Camberwell North). I have been asked to call the attention of the Ministry to the fact that people are somewhat disconcerted at what they deem failure to intercept as much as they would hope the attacks on London from the air. I raise the question, not that I feel competent to criticise from a technical point of view, but in order to give the hon. and gallant Gentleman whom I see on the front Bench an opportunity to give the House some information concerning it. Some of the perturbation arises from the fact that there have been frequent occasions when a warning or an alert, whatever you may call it, has synchronised with the falling of the bombs, and sometimes the bombs have arrived first. . . .

That brings me to another aspect of the case. When I last spoke on this question I made reference to the fact that the people were greatly encouraged by the increase in the barrage that had been put up in order to check attacks, but I think it has now been found that we appear to be back in very much the same position as we were prior to that date. I want to ask, Have we sufficient anti-aircraft guns? One notices that many of the guns which are being used in the barrage are not what would normally be called anti-aircraft guns but some large naval guns which have been called into service, possibly because of their greater power, but also possibly—and this is what one fears—because there is a real shortage of anti-aircraft guns. We would like, if possible, to have some reassurance on that point. . . .

I am not concerned now about the controversy as to any merits of deep shelters and other sorts of shelters. Although there may be some satisfaction in saying "I told you so," that is not the highest form of satisfaction. It is true that Members pointed out the need for shelters, and that we might have been very much better situated had their advice been heeded some time ago; but

I want to suggest now to the Home Office and to the other Departments immediately concerned that the urgent need is to strengthen and improve the existing defences before advancing in other directions

There are numerous cellars and basements and other types of shelters which need strengthening and better accommodation, both for sanitation and sleeping, and that should be done at once. After my speech on the last occasion some Members suggested to me that I was very optimistic if I thought that this Government would interfere with private property by making people lend their basements for the defence of the public. I hope that I shall be proved right and my critics wrong in that respect.

I might remind the Minister that there is serious ground for complaint in London because many of the above ground shelters are without roofs. They have been in that condition for a long time although application has been made again and again for supplies of cement.

Does the cement ring still dominate the position? Up to a short time ago it controlled the whole of the cement trade, and smaller companies were put out of business. Going about the country, one could see large numbers of relatively small cement factories which were unoccupied or not in full production. Is any stand being made against the cement ring, and are any efforts being made to bring those small concerns into production again?

It is not a question of a lack of supply. Private firms can get as much cement as they like in order to build shelters for people who are prepared to pay the price for them for their private use, but we are unable to get it for the local authorities. I hope that we shall be given an assurance that this sort of thing will be remedied immediately.

I now want to come to the position created by people who have been rendered homeless by the bombing of London. In one place in my own constituency I know of people who have been 17 or 18 days in shelter, and there does seem a tremendous delay in finding the necessary billeting accommodation for people in these circumstances. There is no excuse for it, and the matter is partly bound up with the inordinate delay taken in dealing with unexploded bombs and keeping people out of their houses longer than is necessary.

Something ought to be done with regard to quicker evacuation

I suggest you give ear to the broadcast talk which Mr J. B. Priestley gave last Sunday when he called attention to this very fact from his own experience. Cannot something be done to get relatively poor people out of the danger areas? . . .

With regard to provision made in the shelters themselves, from my own experience I have been in shelters and have taken my share in the work being done in them and I admit that a good deal has been done to meet the needs of nursing and medical attention. A good deal, however, remains to be done, particularly with respect to children. Something must be done to invoke the Education Act for the children in these shelters, they are running loose all day, causing a good deal of disturbance to their elders who have been kept awake and have lost their homes and are worried.

There is another matter in which I wish to call attention. I have seen with a good deal of concern that after houses have been bombed and destroyed, furniture and effects have been allowed to stay outside for weeks. We have had a long spell of fine weather, but now it has broken, and a large quantity of bedding, clothing and furniture has been destroyed. If enough assistance cannot be obtained from local authorities, then it is quite plain that instead of waiting some higher authority ought to be invoked and the unemployed brought in to do this work of excavation of furniture and effects and, possibly, bodies which might yet be in the debris.

I bring these matters before the House, as I have said, in no spirit of antagonism to the Minister. I know that he has a very difficult job because this country is now faced with something which it has not had to face for nearly a thousand years. We are fighting a war on our own soil under conditions which are quite foreign to us and unknown in our experience. These are conditions which call for improvisation and compel us to suffer many things to which we are unused. I am bound to agree that there is a good deal to be said for the view that there has not been as much foresight as there might have been. Many things were foreseen by private Members of this House and brought to the notice of the Government, and if attention had been given to them by the Government we would probably be in a very much better position to-day. But there is not much use in mourning over these things. Here is the fact. In all

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (MR. MALCOLM MACDONALD)

I quite agree that a great many people have stayed in the centres far too long and much longer than is desirable. The major factor in producing that situation has been the continued presence day after day, and in some cases even one week after another, of an unexploded bomb in a street of houses. It was undesirable to take these people out of the centres and billet them—it was

not worth doing it. Every day the local authorities hoped that the bomb would be disposed of and that the people could go back. I entirely agree that one of the things which we want to do most to reduce this homeless problem is to speed up the disposal of these bombs but it cannot be done by anybody. It has to be done by trained engineers. However, I can assure the House that the number of Royal Engineers who do this type of work in the London Region is being very greatly increased, and that that particular improvement will go on day by day.

Then there is the second class of persons coming into the centres. These are the people who are there because their houses have been damaged. Their houses however are perfectly easy to repair in a short space of time, and they stay in the centres until the repairs have been done. Again I do not think that work has been proceeding as rapid—
—as it might. Once more it is

What we are doing now is to take labour from other sources and to create a central pool of that labour in the London Region. The labour will be put under one central authority so that that authority can send it out to one borough one day and to another borough the next day as the need requires, to supplement local labour engaged on repair work. I hope that we can speed up the whole work of getting this first-aid repair work to houses done more quickly, and that as a result that second great category of people in the food and rest centres will be sent back to their own homes more quickly than hitherto. The third class of people in the centres are those whose houses are so damaged that there is no likelihood of their returning in the near future. These people are re-settled in various ways, many of them find their own billets by going to their friends or relatives. In the case of those who do not find their own billets a local billeting officer has the duty placed upon him of putting the people into alternative accommodation. Local billeting officers in many of the boroughs have succeeded in doing an immense amount of work.

The situation to-day is that we have far more empty houses furnished and ready to receive homeless people than we have homeless people ready to move into them. There is a great reluctance on the part of many of these people to leave their own boroughs and to go to other distant boroughs where there are these requisitioned houses.

MR SHINWELL. Does that mean that at the present time there are no homeless people?

MR MACDONALD. No.

MR SHINWELL. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that there are more houses requisitioned and ready for homeless people than there are homeless people who wish to occupy them. Therefore, there cannot be any homeless.

MR. MACDONALD: Perhaps the House will understand, if I have not made it clear, when I say that we have more houses requisitioned and ready to receive homeless people in certain boroughs as, for instance, in the West End, than we have homeless people willing to go into these houses. The homeless people refuse to move to these boroughs. One of the great features of the situation is that the dogged insistence of the great majority of these people is such that they wish to stay in their own boroughs near their own homes among their own friends and with their own families.

MR. KEY (Bow and Bromley) Is it not that they wish to remain near their work?

MR. MACDONALD That is so, but it is first a matter of sentiment with them. The hon. Member knows more about it than I do, and I give way to him on that question, but there is a great deal of sentiment in it. People are not willing to leave their own localities if they can possibly help it. This strong sentimental tie exists among people who are not tied for economic reasons. I agree that, apart from sentiment many people cannot leave their localities because they must stay near their work. The hard core of the homeless problem consists in finding homes for the considerable numbers of people who are homeless and who have to stay in boroughs where their work lies but which have not sufficient housing accommodation by themselves.

That is a picture of the position to-day, and I do not pretend for a moment that it is a picture every feature of which is satisfactory. There are still some improvements to be made, there are still faults to be corrected. But I can assure the House that the authorities concerned, including those of us who are working at this problem in the Ministry of Health, will not allow our energies to slacken until we have given that proper care to the homeless people which their plight and their hardship deserve.

SIR PERCY HARRIS (Bethnal Green, South-West) I should like in this public Session—we had an interesting Debate in private Session, though as I said at the time I wished it had been public—to say how much I admire, as I feel we all admire, the magnificent spirit of the people of London. I get letters from

raid warnings, London is very much as usual and that is due to the magnificent patience and good temper of the people of London. Especially would I pay a tribute to the women, the young women, the workers in the factories and offices, who daily experience terrible discomforts. First, there is the job of getting to work, in overcrowded trains, packed like sardines, never knowing when

they will arrive at their destination, sometimes not sure that they will even get into the train. I have been travelling with them in various parts of London and have been amazed at their good temper in these trying circumstances. It cannot be noised abroad too much that London is carrying on magnificently.

On the other hand, do not let us under rate the misery and the hardships of this great population of 7,000,000 people. In many cases they have had to face worse conditions than soldiers in the field. I have heard of soldiers coming back from their training who have admitted that it was far more unpleasant to be in London than to be in the worst camp or centre in the country, and in London some of them have heard artillery fire for the first time. Therefore while we pay a tribute to our people, do not let us underrate their difficulties. This is only the beginning. As the Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out, we are faced with long, cold dreary winter nights and even if the attacks decrease conditions will be far more unpleasant and far more difficult to bear.

I do not want to revive the very controversial question of deep shelters. It is always supposed that one school is in favour of deep shelters and another is in favour of dispersion. These schools are supposed to be antagonistic, but there is need for both kinds of shelter.

I am in favour of using tubes as deep shelters, but I do not want to see a complete reversal of policy. The ordinary street shelter ought, however, to be made more comfortable. I received a letter to day from a constituent of mine in which it states that, in one shelter, the rain has been pouring through every night when the weather was wet. Fortunately the weather has been largely fine, but what experience was in prospect for them during the coming winter the writer did not like to contemplate. The Government would be doing good service if they appointed competent inspectors to survey shelters all over London, in order to make quite sure that the shelters come up to the necessary standard.

I have one final thing to say, and here I am afraid I may be talking to deaf ears because another Minister comes in. This is a question of transport. The transport problem is intimately connected with the problem of shelters, as with everything else. We are all well.

Transport as they like, conditions. I can see that the tube and the District Railway were paralysed. I do not wish to criticise the staff, on the contrary, they showed good temper and guided the passengers from one platform to another and from one station to another, and they did their work well. If the bus system is well worked, it would be prevented.

MR WOODS (Finsbury) We have never advocated deep shelters as being the most efficient method for the whole country, but for certain areas it is the only method worthy of the name of shelter. I recommend those in office at the present time to go to the Ministry of Health and then I think arguments will be made of the

objections that were advanced against deep shelters has been exploded by experience. One of the objections to large shelters was that people would have to go long distances to reach them. As a matter of fact there was a large enough population surrounding

no need for them to rush or stampede. Arguments which were used against such a scheme has now by practical experience proved invalidated.

I ask that the question should again be considered in the light of practical experience, and that responsible Ministers should make first hand acquaintance with schemes recommended by some of the boroughs and see what some boroughs have done.

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proximity there is a shelter which meets the Government specifications. We were held up at the time we were threatened for such magnificent lines. We were prevented from recommending these

concrete above shelters giving absolutely safe protection. It is vital that the ion ted

Before a common lodging house can be built it must provide 400 cubic feet of air space for every sleeper. But here men and women, after a hard day's work, are not given a

compulsory evacuation of every child in London. I know that that is stroog language, but if the children stay in, not only the Tilbury shelter, which is now notorious, but in a dozen shelters that I know of they are going to get a measure of poisoning. They cannot go on sleeping in a church crypt throughout the winter. That is no place for them, nor for old people. It needs a very convincing Minister to do it. I believe that if my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary were in charge of it—which he is now—he could do it. It must be somebody who knows London, who is trusted by the Cockney, who could tell them that they had to get out.

What about the shortage of labour? The Minister said this afternoon that there is a shortage of labour in London. There are unemployed miners in the Midlands, whose job it is to do this sort of thing. Someone says that the Ministry of Labour would come in. That is about the seventh Ministry of which we have heard. London is at war, it has a wonderful population. If you go round the shelters at night you never hear a "grouse". You always get a smile. Why, I do not know sometimes, considering where the people are. I do not want to appear wise after the event. No one foresaw that people would have to sleep in shelters during the whole winter. I appreciate that some steps have been taken. The people have pushed the Government into a great many things already. It is not that Communism has caused the people to be allowed to go into the Tubes—I have heard that too often—but that the people wanted to get away from noise and obtain some form of security. An old couple might sleep in the Anderson shelter, but the young people want jollity, perhaps with an accordion, as is the case on a Friday night in Mile End, so that they may have a proper concert. They are going to do it all through the winter and they are going to stick it, and I ask the Government to match this unconquerable spirit of the people of London. The only way of doing it is by proper regional government. Get rid of the Commissioners if they are not doing their job. Have one man in charge and have an O.C. Transport, an O.C. Food and an O.C. Evacuation. There should be food for the people when they come out of shelters and food for them before they go in at night. Who wonders that people stay three weeks in a rest centre? With three hot meals a day, why not? The rest centres are becoming hostels and if you do not set up hostels the people will. The people living in London are sticking to their jobs and are going to see it through, but I think they want a Government which is worthy of their spirit.

MR SORENSEN (Leyton, West) . . . I do not believe there is any real conflict between those who have advocated deep shelters and those who say, "Let us do the best we can with what we have". It is true that hardly anyone anticipated the present national situation. Hardly anyone a few months ago anticipated that we should have to say to hundreds of thousands of people

that through this coming winter they must dwell in the semi-darkness for hours at night rather than in their homes. In those circumstances we can absolve a certain number from not adopting deep shelters but there is no reason why now that the 'blitzkrieg' in all its fury is upon us we should not consider a whole variety of means of coping with the situation. Thus where there is rising ground and miners can be imported to drive tunnels or shafts into the soil—where that is possible it should be done. It is still not too late. Though surface shelters have been of value yet hundreds of people have come into my area from Poplar and West Ham who search out underground shelters in preference to surface shelters in their own areas because of the fiendish noise that they can endure no longer.

Let us take a comprehensive view of the situation. Let us have underground shelters where that is still possible. Let us aim at the maximum cleanliness and sanitation for if we do not infection and disease will spread like wildfire during the coming winter. Before it is too late let us see that disinfection and ventilation are drastically applied not merely to the inner London area or the London County Council area but to areas such as my own. I want the House to visualise what is happening. Decent men and women go down into a shelter at half past six at night. They sit on a narrow plank, with irregular cement walls behind them unable to sleep or only dropping off to sleep for a little time. By two o'clock in the morning the atmosphere is fetid through lack of circulating air. People become sick, depressed and haggard through lack of amenities. I want the House to visualise that situation and then to think what will happen in a few months time or even a few weeks time unless some drastic action is taken.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTRY OF HOME SECURITY (MR. MABANE) I am sure that all connected with the services are delighted at this keen and vital interest in the problem provoked by the circumstances against which the provision was made and at the clear determination shown in the House to day that nothing shall stand in the way of action necessary to make adequate provision particularly in respect of shelters to meet as nearly as possible the circumstances which now face us. As was so wisely said by the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley (Mr. Key) and by many other hon. Members we are now facing a new problem—the problem of sleeping in shelters. While it may not be entirely true to say that nobody thought this problem would have to be faced it is true to say that it was not contemplated that it would have to be dealt with in this form. The problem we are now facing is that of people having to sleep in shelters under continuous bombardment with in addition the noise from our own barrage.

So far as that existing shelter programme is incomplete it is incomplete because of the difficulty of securing materials for the construction of shelters and for strengthening basements. We

all know the great need for steel for the active defences. We know too that relatively early this year the construction of Anderson shelters was stopped. We regretted it because we felt sure that the Anderson shelter would stand up to the kind of treatment to which we said it would. Experience shows that it has stood up to that kind of treatment, but we cannot urge our claim in face of the more urgent needs of the Fighting Services.

When we had to drop the Anderson shelter we were immediately able to produce plans which we had ready for shelters constructed of alternative materials which in the view of our expert advisers, would provide an equal degree of protection to the Anderson shelters. They are constructed mainly of brick and cement. Shortly afterwards there came an additional strain on the supplies of cement. We have seen up and down the country the uses to which the Army has put cement and we know of many other purposes for which cement is needed by the fighting services. Therefore our shelter programme fell behind. There can be no doubt that now, in present conditions, more cement will be available.

The hon. Member for North Camberwell asked one or two specific questions about cement, and other hon. Members also referred to it. He asked whether the cement ring was preventing cement from being produced in the fullest possible quantities, whether there were not small producers who might be brought into production. Whatever may have been the case in the past, I have the fullest assurance that the cement producers are doing their best to bring back into production all the small producers who have recently gone out of production.

MR. J. GRIFFITHS: Is that assurance from the cement ring?

MR. MABANE: I refer to an assurance given to me since the Debate started by my advisers, which confirm my own view in the matter.

MR. J. GRIFFITHS: Do I gather that the advisers are quite sure that all available productive capacity is being used?

MR. MABANE: No, but they are satisfied that those who are in control of the cement industry are doing their best to bring into production as rapidly as possible the small producers referred to by the hon. Member who opened this Debate.

The hon. Member for Kilmarnock spoke with fervour and passion about the conditions that he has seen in London. He said that the matter is nobody's business. As I said earlier in my speech, that is certainly not true and this House knows whose business it is and where to lay the blame. I think, if I may inter-

pret the general tenor of the speeches in the House, that the House has recognised that this problem is extraordinarily difficult, and hon Members have recognised also that in war, and particularly in conditions such as we have had to endure recently from air bombardment, there is bound to be difficulty, dislocation, and suffering. There is also bound to be that risk of disease which is the inevitable accompaniment of war. But I can assure the hon Member and the House that this problem of shelter had not been neglected, is not being neglected and, I am quite certain that under my right hon Friend who has just become Secretary of State for the Home Department and Minister of Home Security, it will not be neglected in the future.

10 October, 1940.

MR JAMES GRIFFITHS (Llanelli) The first reference I want to make is to the appointment of my right hon Friend to his new post as Home Secretary. I speak for Members in every quarter of the House, and in fact for the whole of this nation on this point. I say that without going into any of the political differences attaching to some of the other appointments. My right hon Friend is a great national figure, but throughout the

for his own personal sake—I know that that does not count—but for the sake of this country, to tell the Prime Minister that some of the duties associated with this office ought to be taken away, and given to somebody else.

The other day I sat here at Question time and listened to my right hon Friend being questioned about some of the problems that the Home Office have to meet, including the important and urgent problem of aliens, of which we have made such an awful muddle. I do not think that my right hon Friend ought to be asked to turn aside for a moment to deal with a problem of that kind. We have Ministers for the Army, for the Air Force and for the Admiralty, but not the biggest army of all—the civilian army, which is the army that will decide the fate of this country. We have not a Minister for civilian defence. I therefore beg of the Minister—and if the Prime Minister were here, I would ask him too—to let this be the first job. It is a full time 24 hour job for any man to organise the defence of the millions of civilians in

this country, and such a Minister ought not to be troubled with all the other matters of the Home Office

I want to speak about the necessity of revising completely the original plan that was drawn up by the Home Office for Civil Defence outside London and in the country as a whole. The original plan was drawn up on the assumption that, if and when we became involved in war with Germany, she proceeded to use, as she is using now, her air force with which to defeat us, France would stand, and that consequently the German Air Force, in bombing this country, would have to set off from bases in the old German territory itself and approach this country in that way. That was a perfectly sound assumption to make, and upon that assumption this country was divided up into three areas—vulnerable areas, including London, the larger cities and the East Coast, neutral areas, and reception areas. All the plans for Civil Defence, A R P schemes, everything we did in this House in the months before war began, and in the early months of the war itself, were based on that assumption. That assumption has now gone. France has fallen, and it is significant that the areas which had to meet the first onslaught of the German bombings were the reception areas. The whole of the country is a vulnerable area. The whole of the civilian population are being bombed. It is true that the extent of the attack varies, but that is not in our hands. No one would guarantee that this attack might not on any day be moved from London to any other provincial town or area. I ask, therefore, that the whole of the classification of the country into vulnerable, neutral and reception areas and all that sort of thing, should be wiped away completely and everything that follows from it. Whatever services are provided in this country, the local authorities should be treated alike, because they are having to meet the same problems in the same way.

... I want to put in a word or two for the people at the other end, whose point of view has not always been expressed in the House, the people who have to do the job of receiving. In the main they are working-class people. Ask any local authority how many houses there are in the area. They must then be having

My right hon. Friend the Minister of Home Security is undertaking a new job, and I make this suggestion to him. If the military see a place which they want, they take it. Why should the Ministry of Home Security in similar circumstances have to say, "Please can we have it?" If there are country mansions which can be used for this purpose, why not take them over? You go to the wife of a collier who already has two children of her own and two children billeted on her and you ask her how

many more children, say, from Camberwell she can undertake to look after. Is it any wonder that people say, "Look at the big house on the hill. They have not anybody in it?" I am sure that my right hon. Friend the Minister of Home Security will for his part, do what is necessary to see that there is equality of sacrifice in this matter.

Miss RATHBONE (Combined English Universities) Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a great deal of the difficulty to which he refers arises from the snobbery and weakness of the local billeting officers who have not the courage to stand up against local grandees who refuse to take in any children?

Mr. GRIFFITHS I think that as a nation we shall have to choose between snobbery and winning the war. I believe that we are going to win this conflict. We are going to win it, in my view, because of the fortitude and courage of the common people. I hope that fortitude and courage will be well led and that the people who are showing those qualities will receive the protection which they have a right to demand. I hope that the nation will show itself deserving of the loyalty of the people both in London and the provinces. The Prime Minister the other day said that we would, some day, rebuild these old cities and rebuild them as more beautiful cities. We shall rebuild this Britain some day and make it a Britain more worthy of the fortitude and courage of its people.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT MORRISON) My hon. Friend has referred to a number of matters. He will appreciate the fact that I am in the disadvantageous position of having only occupied this "abnormal place" for a few days. I will certainly look into this matter of the specification of the areas. I think the House will agree that there is no point in having full time A R P personnel in areas which have not yet felt the blow to any material extent. This, however, is a changing situation and what is an area of good fortune to-day can be an area of consistently bad fortune the day after to-morrow. One must keep one's mind open and retain elasticity and adaptability to deal with the situation as one goes along. I agree with my hon. Friend on that point and will certainly keep it well in mind.

With regard to the Anderson shelters, they certainly seem to have come through the earlier critical Debates with something like flying colours. In this connection, may I say that the general organisation of the Civil Defence services of the country are, I think, on right principles and right lines and my predecessor is entitled to a very great deal of credit for the soundness of the structure which he laid down, where it has been no more severely tested than it has been. . . . I will certainly seek, with every insistence of which I am capable, adequate steel supplies for the

additional provision of Anderson shelters. I may say that some have already gone to certain towns in South Wales and a number, I admit a limited number, have gone to other areas in South Wales.

I fully appreciate that it would be quite wrong to ignore the needs of the Provinces or Wales and Scotland in all these matters. I had perhaps better give an assurance to hon. Members from constituencies outside the London region that, although it is the case that, on my appointment, the Press did feature my London experience, which is always a matter I will not say of suspicion to hon. Members from other places but perhaps of a little apprehension, I fully realise that in this task I am the servant of the whole House, a Minister discharging responsibilities over the whole of Great Britain, and I will certainly not forget the needs of and my responsibilities towards every part of the country.

MR BUCHANAN (Glasgow, Gorbals): Including Scotland?

MR MORRISON: I did include Scotland. I have travelled very well over the country spreading the gospel, and I know Scotland well. The question of priorities is, of course, one with which I am very familiar. It affects steel, cement, and bricks . . . There must be argument, and there is argument, sometimes fierce argument, for these supplies; and somebody must make a balance between the needs of aircraft, for example, which it must not be forgotten are actively fighting the enemy and without which our casualties would be much greater than they are; the needs of anti-aircraft, which is also fighting the enemy, and without which, again, we should be in a much weaker position and there would be more casualties, and the needs for Civil Defence which are exceedingly important and exceedingly great. After inter-departmental discussion agreement is usually reached . . .

As to big houses, certainly I shall have no scruples in this matter. There are one or two difficulties. Sometimes they are earmarked for military purposes—and the soldiers must be somewhere—and often they are earmarked for emergency hospitals. There are rival claims for them, but on the point as to whether I will let them off because they belong to particular people, certainly that will not be the case even though officially the matter is in the hands of the local authorities themselves who have powers to take these properties . . .

There is a desire of the people to come together—and we all understand it—and to be together in great masses in big communal shelters. Do not let us discourage the idea of the dispersal of families in their own shelters and in the surface shelters, as to

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the family shelter and the street communal shelter, organised if

possible on a domestic basis, because the more dispersal there is the better it will be. All shelter is good, whatever it is, if it provides some protection. The individual shelter, the street shelter, basements and tubes must all play their part and we ought to have no prejudice about them. I only make the point that there is a little tendency to forsake the Anderson shelter for the sake of company and a little tendency to forsake the street shelter because now and again one gets a direct hit. Still more terrible things might happen if some other things got direct hits. Do not let us encourage the idea that there is safety in great numbers. There is greater safety in dispersal in reasonably good conditions.

I ought to tell the House of the action that has been taken, for which my predecessor is necessarily largely responsible, with regard to shelters since the 'Blitzkrieg' started. The position was that the local authorities could not, except by the procedure of requisitioning which could be difficult and prickly, take basement shelters. Powers have now been given to the local authorities to take over additional accommodation without requisitioning the whole building which they do not want. They can now require any suitable premises to be made available as shelter for the public, and that covers existing basements not already used. There is a fair amount of basement shelter now available in the City of London.

There was a decision at the beginning of the war that the tube railways should not be used as air raid shelters. It was understandable, because everybody will, I think, agree that whatever
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traffic.

Indeed, I gave a decision last Saturday morning that some additional tube provision in the East End of London should be opened to the public. After that, I hope nobody will say that I am prejudiced against deep shelters, because that was quite deep . . .

There is the problem of the possible flooding of Anderson shelters, certainly in the winter. Appropriate advice the best we can give, has been issued to local authorities, in order that they may pass it on to individual householders. I have told the House about cement.

Now let me deal with the steps which have been taken about basements, in the new circumstances. I have given instructions that there shall be rapidly accelerated action with regard to the provision of suitable basement shelter, wherever it may be available. That is why I want these additional powers to be fully used. A good deal of basement shelter may be available, and we must get it. It may be that money has to be spent upon it to strengthen and improve it, and if so we must spend that money, and it must be found. This matter is going ahead . . .

Whatever may be said about deep shelter, I think everybody will agree that it cannot be regarded as an immediate and complete remedy for this situation. The time factor would inevitably be long. The possibility of providing deep shelter for the whole of the people of a great city like Liverpool, Glasgow or Greater London is very doubtful, and certainly impossible within any limitation of time. You might have a great deal of competition for the deep shelter—you have some of it now—and some difficulty with the people who did not get it. To spread the idea that all that has to be done is for the Government to wave a wand and deep shelter will be there for everybody, is foolish. It is a wicked idea to put into the minds of the general population, and some of those who are doing it know exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it. They are serving the welfare of their country not at all and, indeed, are liable to be helping the enemy. On the other hand, so far as deep shelter can be provided, or shelter that might not be deep but which is noiseless—which has quite a lot to do with it—it shall be done.

everybody. War is not a comfortable business, and we civilians are now experiencing what war is actually like. We cannot expect a comfortable life. None of us is getting it, and we shall not get it. What I do promise the House and the country is that I will do everything I can to limit the trials and sufferings through which the people in all parts of the country are going, and I will do everything I can to help them and to make life easier than otherwise it might have been.

MR WILFRID ROBERTS (Cumberland, North) Broadly speaking, I suppose there are three practical problems. There are the problem of shelter, the problem of evacuation and the problem of the Services, which may be grouped together. With regard to shelters, I think there is still a great deal to be said. I may not have many opportunities of speaking in the near future, and I feel justified in saying to-day that we have warned the Government, and all those who have had experience of war in Finland, Spain, Poland and elsewhere have warned the Government, and our warnings have been absolutely justified, about the experience here in London. Take the story of the tubes. Two years ago the question of the tubes was raised, but nothing could be done. They were not safe. They might flood. The people of London decided to use the tubes, and the Home Office sent their police to put them out. The people of London, in their good natured, good tempered way, settled the problem, and they are there, but really the discomfort in the tubes at night might have been avoided. We welcome the hunks, but it is a waste of energy for people to be resting there insufficiently as they do. If

they had had bunks for the last month you would have got better work out of the people. Their nerves would have been rested. We are going to get them now, and thank goodness for that, but I hope that sort of negative attitude is not going to continue. I very greatly welcome not only the new Minister himself, but the fact that there is a change in the Ministry, because of that negative attitude to the whole problem of shelter.

I hope to see the new Minister and his assistants give a real lead. It would be wonderful to have a Minister who did things before being pressed to do them. It would be wonderful to be able to say on opening one's morning paper, "My goodness he has gone and done it, and a grand job he has made of it," instead of having to come here and press for action and then get only half the job done.

CHAPTER VI

BRITAIN GATHERS STRENGTH

This volume of PENGUIN HANSARD closes with Mr Churchill's analysis of the war situation of 5 November. A new phase of the war had begun with the Italian invasion of Greece, shortly to be followed by the British campaign to drive the Italians out of Egypt and complete the mastery of the Mediterranean. In that new phase the United States of America were to play an increasing part. On 5 November the American Presidential election was held. The return of President Roosevelt was a momentous event in the history of the struggle of the democracies for their future. Though no official declaration of war aims had yet become possible, the discussion of 15 October, here included, shows that many minds were anxiously at work upon the ultimate meaning of the war.

5 September, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) The memorable transactions between Great Britain and the United States, which I foreshadowed when I last addressed the House, have now been completed. As far as I can make out, they have been completed to the general satisfaction of the British and American peoples and to the encouragement of our friends all over the world. It would be a mistake to try to read into the official notes which have passed more than the documents bear on their face. The exchanges which have taken place are simply measures of mutual assistance rendered to one another by two friendly nations, in a spirit of confidence, sympathy and good will. These measures are linked together in a formal agreement. They must be accepted

exactly as they stand. Only very ignorant persons would suggest that the transfer of American destroyers to the British flag constitutes the slightest violation of international law or affects in the smallest degree the non belligerency of the United States.

I have no doubt that Herr Hitler will not like this transference of destroyers, and I have no doubt that he will pay the United States out if ever he gets the chance. That is why I am very glad that the army, air and naval frontiers of the United States have been advanced along a wide arc into the Atlantic Ocean, and that this will enable them to take danger by the throat while it is still hundreds of miles away from their homeland. The Admiralty tell us also that they are very glad to have these 50 destroyers, and that they will come in most conveniently to bridge the gap which I have previously explained to the House, inevitably intervenes before our considerable war time programme of new construction comes into service.

I suppose the House realises that we shall be a good deal stronger next year on the sea than we are now, although that is quite strong enough for the immediate work to hand. There will be no delay in bringing the American destroyers into active service, in fact British crews are already meeting them at the various ports where they are being delivered. You might call it the long arm of coincidence. I really do not think that there is any more to be said about the whole business at the present time. This is not the appropriate occasion for rhetoric. Perhaps I may, however, very respectfully, offer this counsel to the House. When you have got a thing where you want it, it is a good thing to leave it where it is.

The House has no doubt observed—to change the subject—that Rumania has undergone severe territorial mutilation. Personally, I have always thought that the Southern part of Dobrudja ought to be restored to Bulgaria, and I have never been happy about the way in which Hungary was treated after the last war. We have not at any time adopted, since this war broke out, the line that nothing could be changed in the territorial structure of various countries. On the other hand, we do not propose to recognise any territorial changes which take place during the war, unless they take place with the free consent and good will of the parties concerned. No one can say how far Herr Hitler's empire will extend before this war is over, but I have no doubt that it will pass away as swiftly as and perhaps more swiftly than did Napoleon's Empire, although, of course, without any of its glitter or its glory.

The general air battle of which I spoke the last time we met together, continues. In July, there was a good deal of air activity, but August has been a real fighting month. Neither side has put out its full strength, but the Germans have made a very substantial and important effort to gain the mastery, and they have certainly put forth a larger proportion of their total air strength than we

— found it necessary, up to the present, to employ against

them. Their attempt to dominate the Royal Air Force and our anti aircraft defences, by daylight attacks, has proved very costly for them. The broad figures of three to one in machines and six to one in pilots and crews, of which we are sure, do not by any means represent the total injuries inflicted upon the enemy. We must be prepared for heavier fighting in this month of September. The need of the enemy to obtain a decision is very great, and if he has the numbers with which we have hitherto credited him, he should be able to magnify and multiply his attacks during September.

Firm confidence is felt by all the responsible officers of the Royal Air Force in our ability to withstand this largely increased scale of attack, and we have no doubt that the whole nation taking its example from our airmen, have been proud to share their dangers and will stand up to the position grim and gay. Now is the chance of the men and women in the factories to show their mettle, and for all of us to try to be worthy of our boys in the air and not make their task longer or harder by the slightest flinching. That, I know, is the temper of the nation, and even if the average attack is doubled or trebled—which last is most unlikely—and however long it continues, we believe that we can stand it and that we shall emerge from it actually stronger in the air than we were before.

Our Air Force to day is more numerous and better equipped than it was at the outbreak of the war, or even in July and, to the best of our belief, we are far nearer to the total of the German numerical strength, as we estimate it, than we expected to be at this period in the war. I asked that the German claims of British aircraft destroyed during July and August should be added up. I was curious to see the total in which they would amount. I found them to make the surprising total of 1,921 British aircraft destroyed. That total is rather like the figures we heard about of losses among our Fleet, many ships of which have been sunk several times over. The actual figure of British losses, which we have published daily, for these last two months is 558. Our loss in pilots is, of course, happily very much less. I do not know whether Herr Hitler believes the truth of his own published figures. I hope he does. One is always content to see an enemy plunged in error and self-deception. How very differently this air attack which is now raging has turned out from what we imagined it would be before the war. More than 150,000 beds have stood open and, thank God, empty in our war hospitals for a whole year. When the British people make up their minds to go to war they expect in receive terrible injuries. That is why we tried to remain at peace as long as possible. So far as the air attack is concerned, up to the present we have found it far less severe than what we prepared ourselves to endure and what we are still ready, if necessary, to endure. One thousand and seventy-five civilians were killed during August in Britain, and a slightly greater number seriously injured. Our sympathy goes out to the

wounded and to those who are bereaved, but no one can say that out of 45,000,000 people these are losses which, even if multiplied as they may be two or three times, would be serious compared to the majestic world issues which are at stake. Apart from minor or readily reparable injuries, about 800 houses have been destroyed or damaged beyond repair. I am not talking of what can be put right very quickly or what is worth while to put right, but 800 houses were actually damaged beyond repair out of a total in this island of 13,000,000 houses.

This, of course, is very different from the estimate of damage which was given to the War Committee which considered and decided against the possibility of an insurance scheme against air raid damage to property. It would, in my judgment, be worth while for a further examination of such a scheme, particularly as it would affect the small man, and to make this examination in the light of facts which we now know and also of future possibilities about which we are in a far better position to form an opinion than we were before the war began. I have therefore asked my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider the best way of making such a review in the light of the facts as they are to-day. It is very painful to me to see, as I have seen in my journeys about the country, a small British house or business smashed by the enemy's fire, and to see that without feeling assured that we are doing our best to spread the burden so that we all stand in together. Damage by enemy action stands on a different footing from any other kind of loss or damage, because the nation undertakes the task of defending the lives and property of its subjects and taxpayers against assaults from outside. Unless public opinion and the judgment of the House were prepared to separate damage resulting from the fire of the enemy from all those other forms of war loss, and unless the house was prepared to draw the distinction very sharply between war damage by bomb and shell and the other forms of loss which are incurred, we could not attempt to deal with this matter; otherwise we should be opening up a field to which there would be no bounds. If, however, we were able to embark upon such a project as would give complete insurance, at any rate up to a certain minimum figure, for every one against war damage by shell or bomb, I think it would be a very solid mark of the confidence which after some experience we are justified in feeling about the way in which we are going to come through this war.

In the meanwhile, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer who has to give so many halfpence and take so many kicks, and upon whose wisdom and practical good sense those who have been his colleagues have learned to rely—and I can assure the House that it is no mere flattery in order to get the money out of him—has agreed to the following arrangements, in addition to the satisfactory provisions which have already been made in respect of the personal injuries and immediate needs of those smitten. At present in cases where the income of the

claimant's household does not exceed £400 a year and his resources are limited, payments are made to cover damage to essential household furniture up to a maximum of £50, and similar payments are made in respect of personal clothing up to £30, subject to income limits of £400 where there are dependants and £250 where there are no dependants. It is now proposed to abolish these upper limits of £50 and £30 respectively, so that payments for damage to the furniture or clothing of persons of limited means will now be made up to 100 per cent of the damage, whatever that amount may be. Hitherto there has been no provision to enable workmen to replace tools which are their personal property and the use of which is vital to their employment. It is proposed to remedy this hardship by making provision for payments for these purposes, subject to the same income limits which apply in the case of the clothing advances. Similar payments will be made to professional people within the same limits of income. Finally, there is the case of the small retailer who is not insured under the Board of Trade Commodities Insurance Scheme. Here payments up to £50 will be made within the same income limits as for clothing and tools, in order to enable those retailers to replace stocks essential to the continuance of trade. I may say that in all these three cases appropriate mitigating measures will be taken in the border-line cases lying just above the income limits.

Then there is the case of the coast towns which have been declared to be evacuation areas for the purpose of the Defence (Evacuated Areas) Regulations. Upon this a number of Members, as was their duty, have made representations to the Government. The Ministry of Health will be prepared, upon an application from the authorities of these areas, to make advances out of Exchequer funds to enable the authorities to meet liabilities for which collectable rate revenue will not suffice. These advances will be free of interest. The term "advances" in this case is understood to mean that the Government retain the right to call for repayment, but the question how far this right will be exercised will be considered after the war in the light of the financial circumstances then prevailing both in the areas interested and in the country generally. These advances must be conditional upon the examination of the estimates of expenditure and of revenue, and for this purpose my right hon. Friend the Minister of Health will arrange for officers of the Ministry of Health to visit the towns concerned and to confer with the mayors and principal officials—very plucky fellows, some of them, one is proud to meet them. Such conferences will afford an opportunity for advising and assisting the local authorities upon the best means of securing reasonable economy consistent with the maintenance of essential services, and they will also advise them about the collection of revenue. These local authorities will not in the present circumstances be required to increase their existing rate of poundage as a condition of financial assistance. It

is recognised that the shortage of rate income will involve a deficit in the sums collected by rates levied for meeting county council precepts. It is understood that some of the local authorities are in fact proposing to limit their payments in respect of county precepts to that proportion of the total rate which represents the county rate which they have been able to collect. The Government propose to recognise and validate these arrangements, and if in any case an unreasonable burden was thereby thrown upon the country's resources the Government would not refuse to consider the possibility of extending to the county council some measure of assistance.

I think the House will see that we have been endeavouring to meet the cases both of individuals and of local authorities as they are affected by the conditions into which we have moved. We must expect for some time to come to have to live our lives and to carry on our work under these strange conditions, but they are conditions to which the fortitude and adaptiveness of the British people will not, we feel, be found unequal. If, as was suggested in a recent oration, there is to be a contest of nerve and endurance in which the whole British and German

than anything that can be got out of the most efficiently enforced mechanical discipline

In the light of what we have learned so far with regard to the arrangements for air raid warnings—here I come to the point on which I have been asked by the hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite me—we have come to the conclusion that the arrangements for air raid warnings and what is to be done when they are given which appears to be another question, require very considerable changes. There is really no good sense in having these prolonged banshee howlings from sirens two or three times a day over wide areas, simply because hostile aircraft are flying to or from some target which no one can possibly know or even guess. All our precaution regulations have hitherto been based on this siren call, and I must say that one must admire the ingenuity of arm.
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be stopped t had
himself tied up firmly to the mast of duty

Now that we are settling down to the job, we must have different arrangements from those devised before the war. It is right that everyone should know now that the red warning is more in the nature of a general alert than a warning of the imminence of danger to any particular locality. In many cases it is physically impossible to give the alarm before the attack. Constant alarms come to be something in the nature of no alarm. Yet while they give no protection to very great numbers of people, who take no

notice of them, they undoubtedly exercise a disturbing effect upon necessary war work. All our regulations, and much preaching, have taught people that they should take a whole series of steps, mostly of a downward character, when they hear the siren sound, and it is no use having official regulations which point one way and enjoin immediate respect for the alarm when exhortations are given, unofficially or officially, to disregard them and go on working. In our own case to-day, it was felt that the red warning should be taken merely as an alert, but that if special circumstances indicated the proximity of danger then the conditions of alarm should supervene. That is exactly what we did on receiving information that there was danger of a particular kind in the vicinity; and when that special condition departed we immediately resumed our work under the conditions of alert until the "All Clear," which has now sounded, restored us to normal. Something like this unrehearsed experiment may well give us guidance in our future treatment of the problem. All our regulations require to be shaped to the new basis which is being established by actual contact with events.

The responsibility to give clear guidance to the public in time of war is imposed upon His Majesty's Government. In order to preserve the confidence shown them by the House and by the public, the Government must act with conviction. I have, therefore, asked the various Departments concerned to review the whole position as a matter of urgency. In these matters one must expect to proceed by trial and error, and one must also try to carry public opinion along. What we want, on the one hand, is the greatest measure of real warning that is compatible with what all our people are resolved upon, namely, the active maintenance of war production. I will not make any specific announcement to-day, because we are in negotiation with very important bodies concerned employers and employed, throughout the country. We want to move in these matters with sureness, precision and clarity, and no uncertainty or doubt, and I would like to have the opportunity of a little further consultation with the different bodies that are now in touch with the Government. This is a matter, of course, which affects scores of millions of people. Therefore, I will not attempt to make any specific announcement to-day, but such an announcement must be made within the next week, at the latest. I think I have given the House a pretty clear indication of what is in our thoughts and of the direction in which we are thinking of moving at the present time.

There is another point which I should like to mention, and that is this business of lighting the streets, the centres of the cities of our country. [AN HON. MEMBER: "Motor-cars."] Well, it is a difficult question. When my hon. Friend says, "Motor cars," he does not simplify it, but raises a point which has to be borne in mind. Winter is coming along, and I hope we are not going through all that gloomy business that we went

through last year. I have, therefore, asked a committee of persons deeply versed in this matter, responsible people in the Departments to meet together and to see in what way we can make more light and cheer in the winter months, and at the same time subserve the purposes of alert and alarm. Such a course is not at all impossible and I hope to come forward with some proposals, necessarily of a highly detailed character.

I do not mean to trespass at any length upon the time of the House this afternoon because our affairs are evidently very largely in the region of action. No one must suppose that the danger of invasion has passed. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War—to whom I would have gladly paid some compliments if he had not already forestalled me, in a very charming manner, and probably robbed any compliments of some of their intrinsic value—is absolutely right in enjoining the strictest vigilance upon the great and growing armies which are now entrusted in this country to the command of Sir Alan Brooke. I do not agree with those who assume that after the 15 September—or whatever is Herr Hitler's latest date—we shall be free from the menace of deadly attack from overseas, because winter, with its storms, its fogs, its darkness, may alter the conditions, but some of the changes cut both ways. There must not be for one moment any relaxation of effort or of wise precaution, both of which are needed to save our lives and to save our cause. I shall not, however, be giving away any military secrets if I say that we are very much better off than we were a few months ago, and that if the problem of invading Great Britain was a difficult one in June, it has become a far more difficult and a far larger problem in September.

Indeed, while all this preparation for home defence has been going forward on a gigantic scale, we have not hesitated to send a continuous stream of convoys with reinforcements to the Middle East. In particular, a few days ago we found it possible almost to double the effective strength of our Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean by sending some of our most powerful modern vessels to reinforce the flag of Sir Andrew Cunningham, the

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have every intention of maintaining our positions there with our utmost strength and of increasing our sea power, and the control which follows from sea power, throughout the Mediterranean, not only in the Eastern basin but in the Western basin. In this way, both at home and abroad, we shall persevere along our course, however the winds may blow.

17 September, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) I do not feel it necessary to make any lengthy statement to the House to day upon the general war position. Practically all the facts not of a secret nature have already been made public. The advance of the Italian army from Libya is in progress. The two British platoons which have been holding Sollum have been withdrawn. Sharp fighting is taking place upon the desert flank between the armoured vehicles of both sides. The enemy is still some distance from our position of resistance. We must see what happens. The deployment of the German barges and ships in preparation for the invasion of Great Britain and Ireland continues steadily, and we must expect that he will make an attempt at what he judges to be the best opportunity. All our preparations must therefore be maintained in a state of vigilance.

The process of waiting keyed up to concert pitch day after day, is apt after a while to lose its charm of novelty. There is no doubt that it imposes a heavy strain upon all concerned, but we must not underrate the damage inflicted upon the enemy, who also has to wait, by the very heavy and prolonged nightly bombings upon his concentrations of ships and upon all the focal points of his assembly of troops. Undoubtedly serious injury has been done to his ships and barges, and meanwhile our own strength, I am able to assure the House, develops steadily by land, by sea, and above all in the air. Sunday's action was the most brilliant and fruitful of any fought upon a large scale up to that date by the fighters of the Royal Air Force. The figures have already been made public. To the best of my belief—and I have made searching inquiries and taken several cross checks—these figures are not in any way exaggerated. Neither side has yet employed more than a portion of its forces, but there are good reasons for believing at the present time that very grievous inroads are being made upon the enemy's superiority of numbers, and we may await the decision of this prolonged air battle with sober but increasing confidence.

The German attacks upon the civil population have been concentrated mainly upon London, in the hopes of terrorising its citizens into submission or to throw them into confusion, and, of course, in the silly idea that they will put pressure upon the Government to make peace. The deliberate and repeated attacks upon Buckingham Palace and upon the persons of our beloved King and Queen are also intended, apart from their general

prosecute . . . I gave . . . figures up . . . habit of . . . hem the casualty . . . prejudice to our . . . I may now mention

that during the first half of September about 2,000 civilians—men,

have been damaged, but the injury to our war-making capacity has been surprisingly small. We are only now beginning to get the increased flow of production from the great programmes which were started on the outbreak of the war, and it is very agreeable to see that the increases are maintained over so wide a field in spite of the enemy's fire. To show how indiscriminate and wanton is the enemy's attack, one has only to compare the figures of civilian casualties in the first fortnight of this month with the military casualties. There were, as I have said, 10,000 civilian casualties from air attack, but only some 250 of these occurred in all the Fighting Forces.

The air raid precautions organisation in all its branches has proved its efficiency, and the greatest discipline and devotion have been shown by all. The fire brigades are, of course, conspicuous, but in paying tribute to them there must be no disparagement to all the other forms of service which have been faithfully and punctiliously discharged. Of course, the task of preserving the health and well-being of this enormous community in the Thames Valley, exceeding 8,000,000 souls, living under artificial conditions of civilisation, and of supplying them with food and all other necessities and of making provision for those whose homes have been destroyed or who have had to be evacuated—all this and much else have, as the House will realise, cast a strain upon the machinery of government which calls for ceaseless exertion by all authorities concerned. I am glad to say that this heavy and intricate task is being efficiently and successfully discharged, and our whole system of life and labour is being rapidly adapted to conditions hitherto unknown to modern society. Constant adjustments have to be made and defects remedied in the light of experience. As I said last time, a great deal of our progress must be by trial and error. We have to feel our way and do our best to meet each defect as it reveals itself.

I had hoped, as I said when I last spoke during the week that has passed, to promulgate some new rules about air-raid warnings, but the intensification of the air attack has made it difficult to draw precise conclusions, and, in spite of my desire to make good my undertaking to the House, I feel that it is wiser for the moment to allow the process of local adaptation to run its course. Broadly speaking, our plan must be to use the siren, which, it may be noted, has been cut in two, as an alert and not as an alarm, and to have a system of highly-trained what I may call Jim Crows or look-out men, who will give the alarm when immediate danger is expected at any point. Upon this basis everyone must endeavour to carry on his work and see that output and the public services do not suffer or suffer only the minimum interruption. No doubt, we shall work up to a much higher standard than we have

at present attained in many respects, but I feel it better to proceed empirically than, at this moment, to try to make precise conditions, because, after all, we must expect that very much more intense examples of air fighting will be experienced in future than we have yet seen.

There are some matters connected with our arrangements under air attack which I should prefer to discuss in private. I must remind the House that every word spoken in public Session can be telegraphed all over the world, and that there is no reason why we should keep the enemy informed of the details of our arrangements, and thus enable him to inflict the maximum injury upon us. We do not receive any similar information from him about his way of life, although, I am sure, our military staffs would be very much inconvenienced thereby. There are several things that I wish to say to the House, and I dare say there are many things that hon. Members would like to say to the Government. Therefore, I propose that we should now move into Secret Session, and I declare to you, Mr. Speaker that, casting my eyes around, I spy strangers.

8 October, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR. CHURCHILL) A month has passed since Herr Hitler turned his rage and malice on to the civil population of our great cities and particularly of London. He declared in his speech of 4 September that he would raze our cities to the ground, and since then he has been trying to carry out his fell purpose. Naturally, the first question we should ask is to what extent the full strength of the German bombing force has been deployed. I will give the House the best opinion I have been able to form on what is necessarily to some extent a matter of speculation. After their very severe mauling on 15 August, the German short range dive-bombers of which there are several hundred, have been kept carefully out of the air fighting. This may be, of course, because they are being held in reserve so that they may play their part in a general plan of invasion or reappear in some other theatre of war. We have, therefore, had to deal with the long range German bombers alone.

It would seem that, taking day and night together, nearly 400 of these machines have, on the average, visited our shores every 24 hours. We are doubtful whether this rate of sustained attack could be greatly exceeded, no doubt a concentrated effort could be made for a few days at a time, but this would not sensibly affect the monthly average. Certainly there has been a considerable tailing off in the last ten days, and all through the month that has passed since the heavy raids began on 7 September, we have had a steady decline in casualties and damage to so-called vulnerable points. We know, of course, exactly what we are doing in reply, and the size of our own bombing force, and from the many sources which are open to us we believe that the German heavy-bomber pdots are being worked at least as hard as, and

maybe a great deal harder than our own. The strain upon them is therefore very considerable. The bulk of them do not seem capable of anything beyond blind bombing. I always hesitate to say anything of an optimistic nature because our people do not mind being told the worst. They resent anything in the nature of soothing statements which are not borne out by later events, and after all war is full of unpleasant surprises.

On the whole however, we may, I think, under all reserve reach provisionally, the conclusion that the German average effort against this country absorbs a very considerable part of their potential strength. I should not like to say that we have the measure of their power, but we feel more confident about it than we have ever done before.

Let us now proceed to examine the effect of this ruthless and indiscriminate attack upon the easiest of all targets, namely, the great built up areas of this land. The Germans have recently volunteered some statements of a boastful nature about the weight of explosives which they have discharged upon us during the whole war, and also on some particular occasions. These statements are not necessarily untrue, and they do not appear unreasonable to us. We were told on 23 September that 22,000 tons of explosives had been discharged upon Great Britain since the beginning of the war. No doubt this included the mines on the coast. We were told also, on last Thursday week, that 215 tons were thrown upon London in a single night, that is to say, only a few tons less than the total dropped on the whole country throughout the last war. Now, we know exactly what our casualties have been. On that particular Thursday night 180 persons were killed in London as a result of 251 tons of bombs. That is to say, it took one ton of bombs to kill three quarters of a person. We know, of course, exactly the ratio of loss in the last war, because all the facts were ascertained after it was over. In that war the small bombs of early patterns which were used killed 10 persons for every ton discharged in the built up areas. Therefore, the deadliness of the attack in this war appears to be only one thirteenth of that of 1914-1918. Let us say, "less than one-tenth," so as to be on the safe side. That is, the mortality is less than one tenth of the mortality attaching to the German bombing attacks in the last war. This is a very remarkable fact, deserving of profound consideration. I adduce it because it is the foundation of some further statements which I propose to make later on.

What is the explanation? There can only be one, namely, the vastly improved methods of shelter which have been adopted. In the last war there were hardly any air raid shelters, and very few basements had been strengthened. Now we have this ever-growing system of shelters, among which the Anderson shelter justly deserves its fame, and the mortality has been reduced to one-thirteenth or, say, at least one tenth. This appears, as I say, not only to be remarkable, but also reassuring. It has altered,

of course, the whole of the estimates we had made of the severity of the attacks to which we should be exposed. Whereas, when we entered the war at the call of duty and honour we expected to sustain losses which might amount to 3,000 killed in a single night and 12,000 wounded, night after night, and made hospital arrangements on the basis of a quarter of a million casualties merely as a first provision—whereas that is what we did at the beginning of the war, we have actually had since it began, up to last Saturday, as a result of air bombing, about 8,500 killed and 13,000 wounded. This shows that things do not always turn out as badly as one expects. Also, it shows that one should never hesitate, as a nation or as an individual, to face dangers because they appear to the imagination to be so formidable. Since the heavy raiding began on 7 September, the figures of killed and seriously wounded have declined steadily week by week, from over 6,000 in the first week to just under 5,000 in the second week, and from about 4,000 in the third week to under 3,000 in the last of the four weeks.

The destruction of property has, however, been very considerable. Most painful is the number of small houses inhabited by working folk which has been destroyed, but the loss has also fallen heavily upon the West End, and all classes have suffered evenly, as they would desire to do. I do not propose to give exact figures of the houses which have been destroyed or seriously damaged. That is our affair. We will rebuild them more to our credit than some of them were before. London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham may have much more to suffer, but they will rise from their ruins more healthy and, I hope, more beautiful. We must not exaggerate the material damage which has been done. The papers are full of pictures of demolished houses, but naturally they do not fill their restricted space with the numbers that are left standing. If you go, I am told, to the top of Primrose Hill or any of the other eminences of London, and look round, you would not know that any harm had been done to our city.

Statisticians may amuse themselves by calculating that after making allowance for the working of the law of diminishing returns, through the same house being struck twice or three times over, it would take 10 years at the present rate for half the houses of London to be demolished. After that, of course, progress would be much slower. Quite a lot of things are going to happen to Herr Hitler and the Nazi regime before 10 years are up, and even Signor Mussolini has some experiences ahead of him which he had not foreseen at the time when he thought it safe and profitable to stab the stricken and prostrate French Republic in the back. Neither by material damage nor by slaughter will the people of the British Empire be turned from their solemn and inexorable purpose. It is the practice and in some cases the duty of many of my colleagues and many Members of the House to visit the scenes of destruction as promptly as possible, and I go

myself from time to time. In all my life, I have never been treated with so much kindness as by the people who have suffered most. One would think one had brought some great benefit to them, instead of the blood and tears, the toil and sweat which is all I have ever promised. On every side, there is the cry, "We can take it," but with it there is also the cry, "Give it 'em back."

The question of reprisals is being discussed in some quarters as if it were a moral issue. What are reprisals? What we are doing now is to batter continuously, with forces which steadily increase in power, each one of those points in Germany which we believe to be of great importance.

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skill of our navigators enables us to find with a very great measure of success, to any other targets at the present stage. Although the bombing force that we are able as yet to employ is, as I have told the House on several occasions, much less numerous than that of which the enemy disposes, I believe it to be true that we have done a great deal more harm to the war-making capacity of Germany than they have done to us. Do not let us get into sterile controversy as to what are and what are not reprisals. Our object must be to inflict the maximum harm on her war-making capacity. That is the only object that we shall pursue.

It must not be thought that the mists and storms which enshroud our island in the winter months will by themselves prevent the German bombers from the crude, indiscriminate bombing by night of our built up areas into which they have relapsed. No one must look forward to any relief merely from the winter weather. We have, however, been thinking about the subject for some time, and it may be that new methods will be devised to make the wholesale bombing of the civilian population by night and in fog more exciting to the enemy than it is at present. The House will not expect me to indicate or foreshadow any of these methods. It would be much better for us to allow our visitors to find them out for themselves in due course by practical experience. I think that is much the best way to handle that particular matter.

Meanwhile upon the basis that this will continue and that our methods will also be improving, we have to organise our lives and the life of our cities on the basis of dwelling under fire and of having always this additional chance—not a very serious chance—of death, added to the ordinary precarious character of human existence. This great sphere of domestic organisation becomes the counterpart of our military war effort. The utmost drive and capacity of which we are capable as a Government and as a people will be thrown into this task. Nothing but the needs of the Fighting Services can stand in the way. We must try to have shelters with sleeping bunks for everyone in the areas which are liable to constant attack, and this must be achieved in the shortest possible time. As soon as it is accomplished, and in proportion

as it is accomplished people will have to go to their proper places, and, above all we must prevent large gatherings of people in any shelters which only give illusory protection against a direct hit. People must be taught not to despise the small shelter. Dispersal is the sovereign remedy against heavy casualties. To my right hon. Friend the new Minister of Home Security we have a man of warm sympathy, of resource and energy, who is well known to Londoners and has their confidence, and who will equally look after the other cities which are assailed. But do not let it be thought that the work of his predecessor, now Lord President of the Council, has not been of a very high order. There is no better warhorse in the Government. I am ashamed of the attacks which are made upon him in ignorant and spiteful quarters. Every one of his colleagues knows that he is a tower of strength and good sense, fearless and unflinching in storm and action. With my many burdens, I rely greatly upon him to take a part of the civil and domestic load from off my shoulders, setting me free for the more direct waging of the war. Large schemes are already on foot for providing food and hot drinks for those who sleep in shelters, and also for entertainment during the winter evenings. Far-reaching measures are being taken to safeguard the health of the people under these novel and primordial conditions. Widespread organisations and relief to those whose homes are smitten is already in being and is expanding and improving every day. All these matters will be unfolded at length, some in public, some in private Session, by the Ministers responsible for the various branches of action.

There is one scheme, however, upon which I must say a word to-day. The diminution of the damage done by blind bombing from what we had expected before the war, in the figures that I gave the House in the opening passage of my speech enables us to take an enormous step forward in spreading the risk over the property of all classes, rich and poor. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, as I indicated a month ago, is preparing and in fact has virtually completed the preparation of, a Bill for nation-wide compulsory insurance against damage to property from the enemy's fire. Immediate needs of food and shelter are already provided for, so is loss of life and limb as far as it is possible for human beings to be compensated for such calamities but why should we have the whole value of the buildings of the country simultaneously and universally discounted and discredited by the shadow of a sporadic sky vulture? Such a course would be financially improvident and also fiscally insane. An appropriate charge levied on the capital value of buildings and structures of all kinds will provide a fund from which, supplemented if need be by a State subvention, everyone can be covered, and covered with retrospective effect, and everyone can be made sure that compensation for his house and home and place of business will be paid to him in one form or another at the end of the war, if not sooner, and that, where necessity arises to the intervening

period, means of carrying on will not be withheld. We also propose to provide insurance against the risk of war damage for all forms of moveable property such as industrial plant, machinery, household effects and other personal possessions which are not at present protected by insurance. This will also be retrospective.

As I see it we must so arrange that, when any district is smitten by bombs which are flung about at utter random strong, mobile forces will descend on the scene in power and mercy to conquer the flames as they have done to rescue sufferers, provide them with food and shelter, to whisk them away to places of rest and refuge and to place in their hands leaflets which anyone can understand to reassure them that they have not lost all, because all will share their material loss, and in sharing it, sweep it away. These schemes and measures, pursued on the greatest scale and with fierce energy, will require the concentrated attention of the House in the weeks that lie before us. We have to make a job of this business of living and working under fire, and I have not the slightest doubt that when we have settled down to it we shall establish conditions which will be a credit to our island society and to the whole British family, and will enable us to maintain the production of those weapons in good time upon which our whole safety and future depend. Thus we shall be able to prove to all our friends and sympathisers in every land, bond or free, that Hitler's act of mass terror against the British nation has failed as conspicuously as his magnetic mine and other attempts to strangle our seaborne trade.

Meanwhile what has happened to the invasion which we have been promised every month and almost every week since the beginning of July? Do not let us be lured into supposing that the danger is past. On the contrary, unwearied vigilance and the swift and steady strengthening of our Forces by land, sea and air which is in progress must be at all costs maintained. Now that we are in October, however, the weather becomes very uncertain, and there are not many lucid intervals of two or three days together in which river barges can cross the narrow seas and land upon our beaches. Still, these intervals may occur. Fog may aid the foe. Our Armies, which are growing continually in numbers, equipment, mobility and training, must be maintained all through the winter, not only along the beaches but in reserve, as the majority are, like leopards crouching to spring at the invader's throat. The enemy has certainly got prepared enough shipping and barges to throw half a million men in a single night on to salt water—or into it. The Home Guard, which now amounts to 1,700,000 men, must nurse their weapons and sharpen their bayonets. [Interruption] I have taken the trouble to find out very carefully how many hundred thousands of bayonets are at this time in their possession before I uttered such an adjuration; and for those who have not bayonets at the moment, I have provided for them by the phrase "They must nurse their weapons." During the winter training must proceed, and the

building of a great well-equipped army, not necessarily always to be confined to these islands, must go forward in a hardy and rigorous manner. My right hon Friend the Secretary of State for War will, in the course of the next few weeks, give a further account in Private Session of the tremendous strides which under his guidance our military organisation is making in all its branches. He will also announce in public the improvements which we have found it possible to make in the allowances for the dependants of the Fighting Services to meet the increased cost of living and to secure the proper nourishment and care of the wives and children of our fighting men. I shall not anticipate my right hon Friend this afternoon.

But, after all, the main reason why the invasion has not been attempted up to the present is, of course, the succession of brilliant victories gained by our fighter aircraft, and gained by them over the largely superior numbers which the enemy have launched against us. The three great days of 15 August, 15 September and 27 September have proved to all the world that here at home over our own Island we have the mastery of the air. That is a tremendous fact. It marks the laying down of the office which he has held with so much distinction for the last three years by Sir Cyril Newall, and it enables us to record our admiration to him for the services he has rendered. It also marks the assumption of new and immense responsibilities by Sir Charles Portal, an officer who, I have heard from every source and every side, commands the enthusiastic support and confidence of the Royal Air Force. These victories of our Air Force enable

and well-ried power. It is satisfactory for me to be able to announce that both in fighters and in bombers we are at this moment and after all these months of battle substantially stronger actually and relatively than we were in May when the heavy fighting began, and also to announce that the pilot situation is rapidly improving and that in many weeks our repaired aircraft alone, such is the efficiency of this organisation for repair, exceed by themselves or make good the losses which are suffered, so that in many

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a chance. Perhaps it will be possible to make a more confident statement on this subject this time next year. But do not forget that the resources of the enemy will also be substantially increased by their exploitation of the wealth, of the plants, and to some extent of the skilled labour of captive countries. If it were not for the resources of the New World, which are becoming increasingly available, it would be a long time before we should be able to do much more than hold our own.

Although we have had to face this continual, imminent of invasion by a military Power which has stationed 80 of its best divisions in Northern France, we have not failed to our Armies in the Middle East and elsewhere. All the while the great convoys have been passing steadily and safely on their course through the unknown wastes of the oceans, drawing from all parts of the Empire the forces which will, I trust, enable us to fill in time the terrible gap in our defences which was opened by the Vichy French desertion. I shall certainly not make prophecies about what will happen when British, Australian, New Zealand, Indian and Egyptian troops come to close grips with the Italian invaders who are now making their way across the deserts towards them. All I will say is that we are doing our best and that there as here we feel a good deal better than we did some time ago.

I do not propose to give the House a detailed account of the episode at Dakar. I could easily do so in private, but it would be out of proportion to the scale of events. Moreover, I do not relish laying bare to the enemy all our internal processes. This operation was primarily French, and, although we were ready to give it a measure of support which in certain circumstances might have been decisive, we were no more anxious than was General de Gaulle to get involved in a lengthy or sanguinary conflict with the Vichy French. That General de Gaulle was right in believing that the majority of Frenchmen in Dakar was favourable to the Free French movement, I have no doubt; indeed, I think his judgment has been sound. of him has been enhanced

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 Majesty's Government have no intention whatever of abandoning the cause of General de Gaulle until it is merged, as merged will be, in the larger cause of France.

There is, however, one part of this story on which I should like to reassure the House, as it concerns His Majesty's Government alone and does not affect those with whom we have been working. The whole situation at Dakar was transformed in a most unfavourable manner by the arrival there of three French cruisers and three destroyers which carried with them a number of Vichy partisans, evidently of a most bitter type. These partisans were sent to overawe the population, to grip the defences and to see to the efficient manning of the powerful shore batteries. The policy which His Majesty's Government had been pursuing towards the Vichy French warships was not to interfere with them unless they appeared to be proceeding to enemy-controlled ports. Obviously, however, while General de Gaulle's enterprise was proceeding it was specially important to prevent any of them reaching Dakar. By a series of accidents, and some errors which have been made the subject of disciplinary action or are now subject to formal inquiry, neither the First Sea Lord nor the Cabinet were informed of the approach of these ships to the Straits.

of Gibraltar until it was too late to stop them passing through. Orders were instantly given to stop them at Casa Blanca, or if that failed, to prevent them entering Dakar. If we could not cork them in, we could at least, we hoped, have corked them out but, although every effort was made to execute these orders, these efforts failed. The Vichy cruisers were, however, prevented from carrying out their further purpose of attacking the Free French Colony of Duala, and of the four French vessels concerned, two succeeded in regaining Dakar, while two were overtaken by our cruisers and were induced persuaded, to return to Casa Blanca without any actual violence.

The House may therefore rest assured—indeed it is the only point I am seeking to make to day—that the mischievous arrival of these ships, and the men they carried, at Dakar arose in no way from any infirmity of purpose on the part of the Government, it was one of those mischances which often arise in war and especially in war at sea. The fighting which ensued between the shore batteries at Dakar, reinforced by the 16 inch guns of the damaged *Richelieu* and the British squadron was pretty stiff. Two Vichy submarines which attacked the Fleet were sunk, the crew of one happily being saved. Two of the Vichy French destroyers were set on fire, one of the cruisers was heavily hit and the *Richelieu* herself suffered further damage. On our part we had two ships, one a battleship and the other a large cruiser, which suffered damage—damage which although it does not prevent their steaming and fighting will require considerable attention when convenient.

What an irony of fate it is that this fine French Navy, which Admiral Darlan shaped for so many years to fight in the common cause against German aggression, should now be the principal obstacle to the liberation of France and her Empire from the German yoke, and should be employed as the tool of German and Italian masters whose policy contemplates not merely the defeat and mutilation of France, but her final destruction as a great nation. The Dakar incident reminds us of what often happens when a drowning man casts his arms around the strong swimmer who comes to his rescue and seeks in his agony to drag him down into the depths. Force in these circumstances has to be used to save life as well as to take life. But we never thought that what happened or might happen at Dakar was likely to lead to a declaration of war by the Vichy Government although evidently such a step might be imposed upon them at any time by their masters. Whatever happens it is the tide and not mere eddies of events which will dominate the French people. Nothing can prevent the increasing abhorrence with which they will regard their German conquerors or the growth of the new born hope that Great Britain will be victorious, and that the British victory will carry with it, as it must, the deliverance and restoration of France and all other captive peoples.

That is all I think it is useful to say at the present time, either

about the Dakar affair or our relations with the Vichy Government, except this. We must be very careful not to allow a failure of this kind to weaken or hamper our efforts to take positive action and regain the initiative. On the contrary, we must improve our methods and redouble our efforts. We must be baffled to fight better and not baffled to fight less. Here let me say that criticism which is well meant and well informed and searching is often helpful, but there is a tone in certain organs of the Press, happily not numerous, a tone not only upon the Dakar episode, but in other and more important issues, that is so vicious and malignant that it would be almost indecent if applied to the enemy. I know that some people's nerves are frayed by the stresses of the war, and they should be especially on their guard lest in giving vent to their own feelings they weaken the national resistance and blunt our sword.

I must now ask the House to extend its view more widely and to follow me if they can find the patience to the other side of the globe. Three months ago we were asked by the Japanese Government to close the Burma Road to certain supplies which might reach the Republic of China in its valiant struggle. We acceded to this demand because, as we told both Houses of Parliament, we wished to give an opportunity to the Governments of Japan and China to reach what is called in diplomatic language "a just and equitable settlement" of their long and deadly quarrel—there were no doubt some other reasons, but that one is enough for my argument. Unhappily this "just and equitable settlement" has not been reached. On the contrary, the protracted struggle of Japan to subjugate the Chinese race is still proceeding with all its attendant miseries. We much regret that the opportunity has been lost. In the circumstances His Majesty's Government propose to allow the agreement about closing the Burma Road to run its course until 17 October, but they do not see their way to renew it after that.

Instead of reaching an agreement with China, the Japanese Government have entered into a Three-Power Pact with Germany and Italy, a pact which, in many respects, is a revival of the Anti-Comintern Pact of a few years ago, but which binds Japan to attack the United States should the United States intervene in the war now proceeding between Great Britain and the two European dictators. This bargain appears so unfavourable to Japan that we wonder whether there are not some secret clauses. It is not easy now to see in what way Germany and Italy could come to the aid of Japan while the British and United States Navies remain in being, as they certainly do and as they certainly will. However, that is for the Japanese—with whom we have never wished to quarrel and to whom we have rendered great service in the past—to judge for themselves. Great services have been rendered to them by the peoples of the United States and Great Britain since their rise in the nineteenth century. We have never had a quarrel with them. This is a matter on which they must judge

for themselves. This Three-Power Pact is, of course, aimed primarily at the United States, but also in a secondary degree it is pointed against Russia. Neither of the branches of the English-speaking race is accustomed to react to threats of violence by

prudence and patience that Japan has so often shown in the gravest situations

There is another country much nearer home which has for some months past seemed to hang in the balance between peace and war. We have always wished well to the Spanish people, and in a glorious period of our history we stood between the Spaniards and foreign domination. There is no country in Europe that has more need of peace and food and the opportunities of prosperous trade than Spain, which has been torn and tormented by the devastation of a civil war, into which the Spanish nation was drawn by a series of hideous accidents and misunderstandings, and from the ruins of which they must now rebuild their united national life of dignity, in mercy and in honour. Far be it from us to lap Spain and her own economic needs in the wide compass of our blockade. All we seek is that Spain will not become a channel of supply to our mortal foes. Subject to this essential condition, there is no problem of blockade that we will not study in the earnest desire to meet Spain's needs and aid her revival. Even less do we presume to intrude on the internal affairs of Spain or to stir the embers of what so lately were devouring fires. As in the days of the Peninsular war, British interests and policy are based on the independence and unity of Spain, and we look forward to seeing her take her rightful place both as a great Mediterranean Power and as a leading and famous member of the family of Europe and of Christendom, which, though now sundered by fearful quarrels and under the obsession of grievous tyrannies, constitutes the goal towards which we are marching and will march across the battlefields of the land, the sea and the air.

Because we feel easier in ourselves and see our way more clearly through our difficulties and dangers than we did some months ago because foreign countries, friends or foes, recognise the giant, enduring, resilient strength of Britain and the British Empire, do not let us dull for one moment the sense of the awful hazards in which we stand. Do not let us lose the conviction that it is only by supreme and superb exertions, unwearying and indomitable, that we shall save our souls alive. No one can predict, no one can even imagine, how this terrible war against German and Nazi aggression will run its course or how far it will spread or how long it will last. Long, dark months of trials and tribulations lie before us. Not only great dangers, but many more misfortunes, many shortcomings, many mistakes, many disappoint-

ments will surely be our lot. Death and sorrow will be the companions of our journey, hardship our garment, constancy and valour our only shield. We must be united, we must be undaunted, we must be inflexible. Our qualities and deeds must burn and glow through the gloom of Europe until they become the veritable beacon of its salvation.

Mr LEES SMITH (Keighley). The Prime-Minister concluded his speech with an appeal to the nation which will meet with a response which will be universal. I think the House will have noticed that although he closed with that very solemn warning to us as to what we must be prepared to face, his speech in its total effect was of an encouraging nature, especially that part of it in which he dealt with what has been the central danger, the invasion of Britain.

I come to the important statement he made about Dakar. I think he was right in leaving that statement at a general survey, because, after an episode like that, the country may, for a moment, lose its sense of proportion, and not realise that victory in the Battle of Britain is, in its final effect, more important than any-

no doubt good, but for the fact that, between the initiation of the expedition and its arrival at Dakar, and even while it was on the sea, the entire situation changed. We were, in fact, forestalled before the expedition reached Dakar. The impression I received from reading the episode was that another major misfortune of the adventure was that it was persisted in after the conditions of success had disappeared. Clearly, when General de Gaulle reached the port under the new conditions he had no chance of success, even with British ships behind him. Dakar is a very heavily defended port. I am told that it is the second most heavily defended port in the world. Remembering all the circumstances, it is clear that, even if the British ships had engaged, it would have been impossible for the attack to be successful, unless much larger forces had been brought in.

That brings me to one of the lessons of this exploit. I have once mentioned the matter before, and I wish to draw attention to it again. It is very surprising that the Intelligence Services were not fully informed of the situation in Dakar long before General de Gaulle arrived, and well in time to prevent the final attack. It is a pity that our own Intelligence Services were not better informed than they appear to have been. There are plenty of British residents, and British traders have been there for a long time. It is puzzling to understand why our Intelligence Services were not better informed than they appear to have been.

I do not pursue this point in detail, but will turn to general

remarks which I have made before about our Secret Service. This Service was undoubtedly the best in the whole world during the last war, but every Service man that you meet who has had any opportunity of testing the work of the Intelligence Service by his own experience tells me that in this war the Service has been a complete disappointment and in fact, that it has been no good at all.

I therefore ask once again as I did in the last Debate whether this Service could not be removed from the Foreign Office. I am convinced that the Foreign Office are not adapted for dealing with Secret Service methods of the type necessary to grapple with Herr Hitler and I therefore ask once again for a ruthless grappling with this problem of the Secret Service. Never in the last war had the Secret Service such an opportunity as in this war because there are tens and perhaps hundreds of millions of people in Europe anxious to take every risk and make sacrifices in order to beat down their present masters.

In dealing with the Battle of Britain the Prime Minister told us not to be lured into supposing that all our danger of invasion has passed. That is so. I cannot see any prospect of a successful invasion so long as we have an undefeated Air Force in the sky, and that is why the figures of the results of the contests of the R.A.F. with the German invading squadrons determine not only the future of the war but the actual immediate issue of invasion.

Every morning the papers give us an analysis of the number of machines and pilots we lose in comparison with the number of machines and pilots which the Germans lose. Those figures are very interesting and vital but I have always attached equal importance to another way of looking at the same subject. In all our discussions before the war we were told that if we brought down more than a certain percentage each time the raids could not, under any circumstances continue. For the first five weeks of the war, the percentage brought down was between 15 and 20 per cent. and it was said that air raids could not continue for a long period of time at that rate of wasting. In the great battle of 15 September to which the Prime Minister referred the percentage rose to 33 per cent., according to official figures and 50 per cent., according to the additional figures given by Air Marshal Barratt. On 27 September the results were as good as those of 15 September. It is clear that our anticipations are being fulfilled. Germany as a matter of fact, has abandoned daylight bombing as a serious effort to defeat this country. She has abandoned daylight bombing on the scale with which she conducted it up till these defeats from 15 September onwards. She has taken to night bombing. In my view the very fact that Germany has adopted night bombing is itself a confession of failure, because before the war the Luftwaffe always claimed as one of its doctrines that night bombing could have no military effect. They did not believe in it, they did not train their pilots for it, and they always argued that as it could not be precision

bombing it could not hit military objectives, and that therefore from the point of view of hitting military objectives it was of no use

At the moment the campaign in the Eastern Mediterranean overshadows anything that can happen in Europe itself. Of course I cannot deal with the question of the actual balance of military and naval forces, but I do suggest that when we are considering aerial bombardment for the immediate future, Italy may be a more profitable target for us than Germany itself. The final issue of this war is between the will power of the people of Britain and the will power of the people of Germany, but in the war which matters in the immediate future, which is the war in the Eastern Mediterranean, it is Italy with whom we have to deal and Italy at present has fought a war and won territory without

out. We know that their anti aircraft defences are very weak. The spirit of her people is not out and out in this war. Therefore if we could devote to Italy in actual aerial bombardment anything approaching the attack which we have devoted to Germany, the results would be very far reaching.

I am coming to one other subject in relation to which I wish to bring up to date certain figures which I gave to the House, because they again strengthen certain views which I have expressed. With regard to the Battle of Britain, it is clear that when Hitler makes up his mind that he will not defeat us by invasion, he will turn to the other alternative which many people have always thought more dangerous to us, that is, defeating us by sinking our merchant ships at sea. When I last mentioned this point about six weeks ago, the loss of tonnage of our own and neutral ships amounted to 67,000 tons a week. I assumed that that was about double the amount which we could rebuild, and it was equal to half the worst week in the last war. Now we have the last published figures, which are for the week 16 to 23 September. The merchant shipping tonnage sunk had risen to 150,000 tons—worse than the worst week in the last war. That cannot possibly continue for any length of time. I know that the American destroyers are helping, but they are old destroyers. They have not much fuel capacity. They were not built to work 1,000 miles from their bases. We can easily exaggerate the amount of help that these destroyers can afford.

I say this because I want to bring the House back to a difficulty which confronts us. We overcame the submarine menace last year because our ports were to the West of the German bases. We could catch the submarines as they came out and as they came back. Now the Germans have French ports, such as Brest and Lorient. They are to the West of our bases, Plymouth and Portsmouth. From those French ports, they are sending their submarines to the West of Ireland, where, as is generally known,

The only other point I want to make is that I saw a very interesting statement the other day that the Government are busy working out war and peace aims. The cause for which we are fighting explained not exactly in detail but with a certain amount of fullness certainly would be extremely useful in influencing public opinion abroad. I am sure that the people of this country desire some information. I have noticed a statement that the Ministry of Information are initiating a campaign. They say that the Government are working out a policy of war aims and post-war plans. That is something quite new. I hope that an early opportunity will be given to us here to learn what precisely the Ministry of Information are now bringing forward in the name of the Government as regards those aims.

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is only one very small incident in that operation. I regret to say that I feel that some of our Colonial Office officials deserve censure for not having kept the Government in closer touch with the situation as it was developing there. When I was in West Africa it was quite clear that part of the Press there were being subsidised by Germans. I could tell you the exact sum of money paid by German agents and tell you who they were, to the editors of papers published in English and no doubt in the French areas, for the purpose of putting forward their propaganda. These facts were well known to the West African Government last year, and I have not the slightest doubt that they are in some pigeon-hole here at the present time. It is really reprehensible that these facts should not have been brought, through the Colonial Office, to the notice of the Government here.

Furthermore the question of the war developing in the Near East means that it is of course part of the battle of Africa, and if we are to envisage the campaign as it is likely to develop, it is necessary to remember that difficulties of distance, desert travel and travel in tropical countries have been altogether revolutionised, so far as Africa is concerned, within the last 15 years. It is now possible to motor in any ordinary motor car which has not been specially adapted either from West to East or North to South. In most seasons of the year in Africa there are good roads, or, at any rate, passable roads. There are emergency landing grounds on which an aeroplane can land, and if the war does, as seems inevitable, extend to Africa on a large scale, it will not be a war confined to the Near East, Dakar or West Africa. It will be a war of Africa, and that is why I mentioned just now the hope that the Prime Minister would extend, as it were, the area to which his speeches reach by making an appeal to the black population of Africa and speaking to them of those war aims of the future which will offer them something they have not got at the present time.

We should offer to abolish Colonial status altogether and to bring in the African peoples on the basis of co-operating nationalities. I do not mean, of course, of the standard of the Dominions or along those lines—many of the African people themselves will be the first to realise that that is impossible—but we ought to get away from the old fashioned English Kiplingesque idea of Colonies and realise that the peoples there, with their very different ideas, have, nevertheless, a civilisation. We must offer them a real share in the new world. In the last few days we have all read in the papers the statements by the Axis Powers that Hitler and Mussolini are undertaking the organisation of a new order in Europe and that the Japanese have had confided to them the task of inaugurating a new order in the East. To us, of course, with our judgment of Hitler and Mussolini, that kind of order appears in its true light as a disaster in the shape of slave driven peoples, but it does not mean to say that the psychology of that appeal will not have a tremendous effect on the many people to whom it is addressed outside the boundaries of the States concerned, which are at present dominated by those Powers. I would like to see our Prime Minister appeal for a new order in the world on the British lines, speaking not only of freedom, but of breaking the bonds and the shackles of old ways of living as applied to the Colonies India and China, and sending a message to the whole world which will not be confined to the British and American peoples, but which will rally those peoples to us in spirit even more than they are rallied to us at the present time.

MR HORE-BELISHA (Devonport) Events move so swiftly that what happened three weeks ago already seems a period in history. Dakar partakes of the character of a battle long ago. I would, however, at this stage, ask only one question upon the subject. Have we revised our policy towards the French Fleet?

It was once our course of conduct to put French ships out of commission, and we took the most drastic action to that end. At Oran despite every sentimental consideration we fired upon the vessels of our former Ally. I gather that it is now our intention to allow a greater latitude to the ships of the Vichy Government. I hope, if I am right, that that policy will be revised and that we shall not hesitate when challenging opportunity offers to put out of commission a Fleet which, if added to those of our enemies, would have the most embarrassing effect upon the conduct of our naval operations.

MAJOR MILNER (Leeds, S E) I want to make an inquiry or two about Dakar. The Prime Minister made it clear why the French ships were allowed to pass Gibraltar. It was apparently a mistake, the right hon. Gentleman frankly admitted it and said that those responsible would be dealt with. But we should like

to know why these ships having passed Gibraltar, were permitted to go any further. We did at a later stage turn them back from a further journey after they had left Dakar. Why did we not round them up at an earlier stage and prevent them going to Dakar until we were satisfied about their object and were sure that there were no Germans and Italians on board?

It was stated in the official communique that German influence was spreading in Dakar but the statement went on to say—and this was the explanation given at the time that it was no part of our policy to interfere with the movement of French warships if they were not destined for ports under German control. *Ex hypothesi* however German influence was spreading to Dakar. It is therefore incomprehensible why the ships should have been permitted to go any further. A further question arises. The ships having been allowed to proceed General de Gaulle's effort at making a peaceful landing having failed his emissaries under a white flag having been fired upon and fire having been directed upon our ships why did we not proceed at once with any British Force necessary for the purpose to take Dakar if the agreement with General de Gaulle did not permit him to do so? Was our force not strong enough or did our resolutions fail or, as I think was possible, was there a conflict between those who have to fight and win the war and those who direct our foreign policy? I hope that notwithstanding all our experience of appeasement we are not still seeking to appease those who are our actual or potential enemies. Did we not fall as so often before between two stools? I hope that we shall have a precise answer to these questions because they are vital.

SIR WALTER SMILES The Hon. Member for North Islington (Dr. H. Guest) made some remarks about our Colonial Civil Service. I believe that the Colonial Office here have lost touch with their Civil Service in the Colonies. I do not believe there is sufficient exchange of personnel between the Civil Service in the Colonies and the men who sit at home in the Colonial Office. It would be for the good of the Service if occasionally men home from the Colonial Civil Service spent a year or two keeping the Colonial Secretary actually in touch with conditions as they exist.

My other point is as to the supposed leakage of information about our ships going from Eire. This is not my own idea but is the opinion of naval officers and officers of the Mercantile Marine. The opinion of officers of the Mercantile Marine is that the reason for the loss of such ships as those which carried our evacuee children is definitely leakage of information from Eire.

MR. CLEMENT DAVIES (Montgomery) I went over Dakar 12 months ago last February, and was privileged to be

taken over all the defences. They are certainly formidable. Not only are they formidable on the hills around Dakar, but on the little island which now forms the outer bastion of the main harbour. Anybody with any knowledge of the matter at all should have realised that offensive action against Dakar would be fraught with tremendous difficulties at any time. I understand that information came through that the people of Dakar were, in the main, friendly towards General de Gaulle and this country, and that it would be possible to take it without very much effort. Then ships left the Mediterranean, they could have only one object, unfriendly to this country.

One can pass over the mistake that occurred by which the ships were allowed to move out of the Mediterranean. It is human to err, and I dare say that the persons responsible for that mistake will be dealt with, but the ships came out. It was then found what their object was. Otherwise, no effort would have been made to stop them. They went on, and two of them, I understand—it may have been only one—were persuaded to turn back. In the meantime, the others had put into Casablanca. Those again escaped, it may have been due to bad weather or to somebody else's mistake; but, at any rate, they did it. I should have thought that there could be no doubt now in anybody's mind that there was a real hostile force within the harbour of Dakar. In "hostile," I am using too strong a word, "unfriendly" is better. Nevertheless, it was decided to go on. I should have thought that once it was realised that unfriendly forces had got inside, the situation called for further consideration before proceeding any further. It may be that that further consideration took place. All that one can say at the present time is that we do not know enough, but that the incident has caused worry, anxiety and even distress.

We all know from our experts that there is a serious loss of production, coming at a time when, in Germany, there is an increase in the whole of production. The Germans are subject to bombing which undoubtedly has affected them, but what they have obtained from the occupied countries has not only covered the gap caused by the loss suffered through our direct hits but has greatly increased their production. Figures have been given to me by the Oxford Department of statistical inquiries, which makes such a close study of these matters. As far as they can work them out—they have worked out such figures before—there is information of the following kind which they can get. The amount of war effort production that Germany is now putting forward, thanks to the fact that it has extracted tributes from the occupied territories, has increased from £3,500,000,000, which was about the figure of last April and May, to the enormous figure of £4,200,000,000, and that quite apart from the loot which she has taken in the shape of guns, ammunition, aeroplanes and everything else from France, Holland, Belgium, Norway and Denmark.

If that is the right figure, it is appalling. Our figure during May, June, July and August was mounting up. The figure that was in the minds of the Government in April was an expenditure

of the difference that has arisen between work stoppage during the whole time of these air-raid warnings and under the new system of putting a watcher on the roof? In one place that I know there would have been a stoppage last week of twelve whole hours. By putting a watcher on the roof the actual stoppage was well under two hours. Multiply that throughout all London, and by instituting this system undoubtedly you will at once call forth a much greater increase of production. You cannot expect these people to respond fully unless they are sure that sufficient precautions are being taken not only for them but also for their wives and children. A man cannot be expected to continue at his work knowing that he is safe, if he feels that at the same time his family are in danger . . .

As far as I know, no one has said a word about the changes which have taken place in the Government. We are getting back to the conditions about which many of us in this House protested before the change of Government. We were protesting from the outset against the War Cabinet consisting of nine men, most of whom were fully occupied with other duties throughout the day. Then in May came a great change, and we had a smaller War Cabinet of five. Of those five, three had no definite duty allotted to them, which is, of course, right. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary are still members; but out of the five, three—the Lord Privy Seal, the then Lord President of the Council, and the Minister without Portfolio—were able to devote all their time to true War Cabinet work. Now we have gone back to the figure eight, and of those eight, five have other full-time occupations. How can they devote the time which is necessary for settling the main problems which should be dealt with by the War Cabinet? . . .

MR JOHN MORGAN (Dorchester). This issue of the composition of the Cabinet has disturbed the country in certain ways almost as much as Dakar has done. It was regarded as a clear indication that already party considerations were at work again, that for some reason the Prime Minister was coming to the idea that he should accept the possible leadership of the Conservative party, and that he was already in some way supplementing the War Cabinet to that end. That is putting the matter bluntly, but that is how it has come to be regarded by many people. A policy which gives rise to such feelings is not doing good service at the present time. The support that the Prime Minister enjoys at present is founded on the fact that he is not a good party man.

That fact has enabled an important measure of public feeling to rally behind him, and has enabled us on this side who subscribe to the admiration which is felt for certain of his qualities—certainly in wartime—to sink our voices. The Government, if

accepting the major blame, for this country as a whole, for the failure of the expedition . . .

MR. A. BEVAN (Ebbw Vale) May I interrupt my hon. Friend to say that a very much more sinister rumour is in circulation to the effect that de Gaulle himself said that he thought the enterprise ought to be abandoned but was overruled by the Prime Minister! If that is not true, it ought to be denied.

MR. MORGAN That is not a question to which I can properly address myself, and I have no intention of doing so, but it substantiates the feeling I had after the Prime Minister's statement this morning that, in general, we were in error for our handling of the situation, and to that extent we ought to absolve de Gaulle in this House from any responsibility for the shame that we feel for that incident.

On the other hand—and the whole House is testifying to it—I am relieved that the Government have come to a decision to reopen the Burma Road, and I hope that that means that we are fully to support China now and in the future. There are the four great peoples—the United States of America, China, the U.S.S.R., and ourselves, four great dynamic civilisations, which, if they were to co-operate would make Naziism and Fascism look like the fake philosophies they are. There is no substance in their creed, and the fusion and volition of these great Empires moving towards common ends would, I think, be something worth the Foreign Office going a long way out of its way to achieve.

The whole country—and again I can testify personally to what is felt by the common man—believes that in some way or other . . . that in some way or other . . . initiative there is quiescent, . . . we are being forestalled . . .

MR. STOKES (Ipswich) . . . I turn to the Prime Minister's speech, which personally—I may be the only Member to feel so—I found disappointing. Nobody admires more than I do the right hon. Gentleman's rhetoric, and I enjoyed listening to him. But I am bound to say I am getting a little tired and a little nervous of what lies behind the window-dressing. We have

had a series of misfortunes which have been covered up and glossed over. At the start there was Narvik. We were told that all the ships that crossed the Skaggerak were going to be sunk. Then there was the great and dreadful disaster in Northern France. It has never been properly cleared up why the Northern Armies were not withdrawn when the hinge broke at Sedan. Now there is Dakar. That episode brings home to me a word of advice given me years ago—it is that one should not pay attention to émigré governments. In saying that, I am not casting any reflection upon General de Gaulle. I am sure he acted with the greatest integrity, but history has shown that while one should give comfort, help and all that one can to émigré governments, the less attention one pays to their advice the better in the long run.

I was astonished by the Prime Minister's statement that the First Lord of the Admiralty did not, apparently, know what was happening to these ships. The right hon. Gentleman had only to read the daily Press to see that the ships were coming through Gibraltar. Everybody wondered why. Everybody thought there was a deep plot and that presumably all the ships would surrender when they were safely down the West Coast of Africa. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the Governor General of Nigeria and the Commander in Chief of the Forces in West Africa were in agreement with this scheme and whether they supported it from their local experience of what the feeling was in the district. Secondly, rumour, which, of course, is frequently wild, suggests that the forces that went to Dakar were perhaps not sufficient. I should like to ask whether it was left to the officer commanding the naval forces off Dakar to decide whether he should attack or not, or was the decision given from this end?

MR A BEVAN (Ebbw Vale) From statements in the general Press and some very responsible portions of the Press, I had been led to hope that the Prime Minister would announce to the nation and to the world what were the Allies' war aims. It is no use trying to dismiss this matter as a purely academic question. The people of this country are going to pass through very many trials in the coming winter. It is very easy for many of us, who, after all, live in fairly comfortable circumstances to be heroic and stand by the flag and to make rhetorical speeches urging other men to stand firm. It is not so easy, however, for millions of poor people in the country to have to live 12 and 14 hours at night in uncomfortable shelters, badly clothed and very often ill fed. It is not so easy for them to stand up to prosaic bombardments and daily vicissitudes. It is necessary for the people of Great Britain to be morally reinforced by receiving from the Government an early declaration of war aims, not only for the purpose—and I want to emphasise this—of rallying to our assistance other nations but war aims which at the same time

will buttress and reinforce the morale of the people of Great Britain. It may be perfectly true that we have potential Allies in the world but ultimately we shall have to rely on the fortitude

country and Europe are not prepared to lose their lives in order to reassemble a ramshackle Europe. They are looking to bigger ideals than that. I hope that the war aims of the Government when they come to be declared will take into account cultural independence and federal freedom where it can be exercised. This is the moment when our aims should be stated. The essence of the matter is that we can only win the victory if we inspire the people by having the right aims.

I was disappointed with one or two other things that the Prime Minister said if he will not mind my saying so. He is a formidable personality and if he is not going to confront him with an year from him a was treating the Cabinet in the

form the Prime Minister has done without giving the House some defence. If he did not feel it necessary to answer our own speeches, he might have thought it necessary to answer his own. The new War Cabinet has in it five heads of great Departments. Surely that is not the kind of War Cabinet which the Prime Minister led us to believe he would construct. It is the very opposite of the advice he has given to the House for many years. There is on it the Minister of Labour, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Foreign Secretary. There is also the Lord President of the Council who has some important work allotted to him. I would like to say a word about him in a moment or two because I have decided to make a very unpleasant speech.

The Lord President has very many great executive qualities but I submit that on the facts he is the last person to be a member of the War Cabinet charged with the framing of general policies. Look at the position we have been in since the beginning of the war. The right hon. Gentleman has been saved from major disaster by the House of Commons having to confront him and resist him on four separate occasions. The right hon. Gentleman had to take the Defence Regulations back after a Debate in the House of Commons which did great damage to the country as a whole because it represented everywhere that the Government was making a wanton invasion of citizens' rights—(Interruption)—I know I am making a very unpleasant speech but these things must be said. There have been far too many smooth speeches but these are the facts. On the second occasion the right hon. Gentleman fought the House of Commons for practically seven

hours, on the Courts (Emergency Powers) Bill. We had to force him to take his Bill back—(Interruption)—Is it not true?

Then, the right hon. Gentleman's handling of the internment of aliens was, and remains a disgrace to the country. There are many examples of the appalling consequences of the way in which that matter has been managed.

The fourth major thing for which the Lord President of the Council was responsible is the shelter policy. The Prime Minister said that the Anderson shelter is a good shelter. Nobody denies it. It is a good shelter. The Lord President of the Council could not make all the mistakes. Shelters had to be produced, and he had the advice of his Department and produced the Anderson shelter. For very limited purposes it is necessary, but because water comes through the tap it must not be thought to come from it.

The deep shelter policy of the right hon. Gentleman has been

[AN HON. MEMBER

because the right hon. Secretary of State to the Home Department made a very good speech the other day, in which he said that the Home Office had now decided to adapt their shelter policy to the behaviour of the people. It meant that

Anderson shelter was not as expedient, there was no reason why both the Anderson shelter and a deep shelter policy could not both have been carried out.

The fact is—and the Prime Minister must recognise it—that a very great deal of damage has been done to the morale of London and the country by this deep shelter policy. I know that what I have said is unpleasant, but it needs to be said. In many respects the Prime Minister is not being well advised. We must put another dose of oxygen into the people of this country. They are brave and resolute, but we on this side of the House are deeply anxious that the Government should adopt a policy bold, visionary and inspiring to try and associate ordinary men and women spiritually and not merely formally with the war effort. If that can be done, we shall get a response which will amaze even the Prime Minister with his faith.

15 October, 1940

WAR AIMS

MR MANDER (Wolverhampton, East). I desire to raise the question of war aims and the policy of the Government with regard to their explanation to the people of this country. I have

always felt that it was not reasonable while we are fighting the battle of Britain, to expect the Government to come forward with anything of the kind or to spend much time thinking about it. However, we are now coming to a stage when the people of this

practical moment. So far to my knowledge this Government has not expressed any views at all as to their war aims. The late Government did. They went some way. It is true that some of the things that they said were not too satisfactory but it is up to this Government to go at least as far as the old one and give us as much information as they feel able to give. I feel encouraged to bring forward this matter because of a paragraph that I saw in the Press the other day, which had apparently been broadcast by the Ministry of Information, to this effect:

The Minister of Information is initiating on 7 October an Empire publicity campaign in this country. The idea is to stress that the war is not a fight between Great Britain as an island and Northern Europe but something that is a vital concern to the Empire as a whole. It is hoped that the Dominions will interest themselves in the scheme.

Now we come to the significant part.

The Government is working out a policy of war aims and post war plans—

That is good news. I am delighted to hear it. I wish them the best of luck.

—and the campaign is intended to give the public a definition of these aims—

Certain information with regard to the aims has therefore already been given to the public.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION (MR. DUFF COOPER)
Can the hon. Member say in which paper the paragraph appeared?

MR. MANDER I fancy it appeared in most organs of the Press. It was in *The Times*, the *News Chronicle* and others. I was under the impression that it had been issued by the Minister of Information but if he denies that then of course, I accept his word. At any rate it was published on authority of some kind. It concludes with the words:

thereby anticipating the demand that is likely to be eagerly expressed as soon as the blitzkrieg or any invasion attempt fails.

I do not want to embarrass the Government in the least, I am a very warm supporter of the Government. But I hope my right hon. Friend will be able to say something of general interest and value on the subject. Let me refer to one further statement

which has appeared in the Press. It is an extract from a remarkable speech—one of a series of remarkable speeches—by the Minister of Labour. He was reported on 10 October as follows:

* The whole question of the reorganisation of our social service would have to be faced sooner or later. Nor were they unmindful of the After War. A Cabinet committee to consider these problems has been established.

That is interesting. The report goes on:

* There might be other trying periods but it was a little difficult when dealing with War Aims and reconstruction to put precisely on paper what we were going to do until we had won.—

We can all agree on that—

“The Government, however, was working out general principles of guidance for both at home and abroad.”

It is quite clear that something of importance is going on about which, possibly, nothing could be said at present except that it is going on. On the general question, I would just say that I am quite sure that the sooner the Government are able to make clear to the House of Commons and to people outside, in this country and the rest of the world, what are their general ideas about the world after the war the better it will be. The peoples of the

Mr WOODBURN (Stirling and Clackmannan, Eastern). I am disturbed about this campaign for a Government statement of war aims, which carries the implication that this country has gone to war for some special positive purpose. As far as I am aware this country had no such intention in September, 1939. We went to war to resist Hitler in his attempts to impose a new order on Europe—and that was our only purpose. If we are now to impose a new order, that will be an extremely big job. Those who ask that we should announce war aims seem to suggest that these war aims are to include a new order for the world, that we should take up the task which Hitler has usurped, by dictating a new world order. I believe that that is beyond our strength and our ability. Our first declaration to the world should be that we have no ulterior peace aims or war aims at all, that Britain is out for nothing except to defend the right of countries, our own included, to live their own lives and carry on their own civilisation. We have associated with us other countries which have been brow-beaten and dominated by Hitler. It is true that we must stand with them in the recovery of their liberties, but that is a different thing from the supposition that we have to draw up some precise scheme by which we are to decide how the world shall live. To anyone who wishes to say that I would suggest

that he should start with Ireland. If anybody can tell us how we are to solve all the problems of Ireland, then, I believe, they can solve the problems of the Balkans, of the racial minorities in Europe and the religious problems of the world, which to me are insuperable . . .

Miss RATHBONE (Combined English Universities) . . . I think many Members do not put themselves in the place of the millions of people all over Europe who, although no doubt, in a way, they would rather we won the war than the Germans, are not enthusiastic because they are uncertain of what we are fighting for. To many of us, it seems almost a platitude to go on repeating that we have no Imperialist or aggressive aims, but I am not at all sure that, in view of the continuous and in many ways skilful propaganda of Germany and Italy, the idea that this is merely a combat between two groups of Imperialistic powers may not gain hold. From the point of view of foreign propaganda it is extremely important that we should keep on repeating, even *ad nauseam*, the ideals for which we stand, not in quite as vague terms as those in which the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton (Mr. Mander) put it, not merely that we are working for a better future for the world—I do not think that carries much weight—but we could in many ways outline the kind of thing that we mean by better order.

I regretted very much hearing the Prime Minister's statement that he was going to put aside any idea at present, in spite of the representations which have been put forward, of any further statement on peace or war aims. I believe that he is losing a great opportunity.

MR. J. J. DAVIDSON (Glasgow, Maryhill). The Prime Minister said to-day that we were not fighting for the *status quo*. I would point out to my hon. Friend that if we are not fighting for the *status quo*, we must be fighting for a condition of affairs which is different. There must be alterations. Therefore, what are we as Members of Parliament to say to the soldiers, the housewives, and the men who are carrying on the services? When they point out the sacrifices and the death and disaster that have taken place in London and in Scotland, England and Wales, are the Government merely to say it is because we are resisting Hitler? Have the Government no reward to offer? The men, the working women and the boys and girls who are making great sacrifices, have a right to ask the Government, "What is your policy for the future of the country, and what do you guarantee in return for it?" It is not for me to say, "We had before." It is not for me to say, "We are fighting." It is not for me to say, "We will give them

enthusiasm to be successful in the war

MR WOODBURN I think that my hon Friend will agree that while what he says would stimulate the morale of the people, the very opposite would happen if we promised them nothing in this country and put before them some scheme for forcing democracy on other countries

MR DAVIDSON No one has submitted that we should say to the people of this country "You are getting nothing but we are going to force democracy on other countries." We are an international organisation. Unless we can show the discontented and oppressed sections of the countries in the world that we are going to benefit them and that we are to bring some improvement in their conditions and unless we can show clearly that the great Government of Great Britain will ensure certain benefits for them, what can we expect? It is the duty of the Government to weigh these facts very carefully indeed and to come out on the side of the oppressed people in other countries. I believe that our war strategy could be more forcibly and effectively directed among the discontented elements of those countries which are under Hitler's rule to day.

MR RHYS DAVIES (Westhoughton). The right hon Gentleman the Minister of Information has been in the United States of America as I have been, and I am sure he will have learned that leading politicians there are not quite satisfied with the objects that we state we have in view in connection with this war. The only reason I have for saying a word about this important problem is that I have travelled a little over the Continent of Europe. What are the problems that caused this war? Before you can state your peace aims you must find out what caused this war. It is not Hitler himself who caused this war. As a matter of fact, there are people in Great Britain and in France who welcomed Hitler at first because he was going to stamp out Communism on the Continent of Europe; he is now, however, declaring war on the very gentlemen in France and in Great Britain who welcomed him at the time . . .

I represent a fair body of opinion when I say that slogans like "Fight Hitlerism" do not wash with us at all. This war is based on economic considerations from beginning to end, and I think the time has arrived when the Government ought to state what it is we are fighting for . . .

MR. STOKES (Ipswich) I am convinced that the time is long overdue for the Government to make a positive declaration of what we are fighting for. My profound conviction is, whether it be right or wrong—and one can say only what one does believe—that such a declaration would have a profound effect upon the working people of Germany as well as upon the working people throughout Europe and the British Commonwealth. I was

profoundly dissatisfied that the Prime Minister should tell us to-day that he still thought that the time was not ripe . . .

I have been accused recently, after a speech in this House, of not putting forward constructive proposals. Let me say that I have put forward constructive proposals, since 1 October last year, until I am tired of doing so, and that nobody in the Government takes a bit of notice. I dare say that one day—perhaps not while I am alive—people will find it possible to agree with what I put forward.

I say that I

Europe, th

prior to 3 September last year. I am not prepared, on any account whatever, to support the tariff-ridden Europe which we knew before the war. If we are to have peace, tariffs must go; and as soon as we, as one of the leading nations, make it clear that that is a policy that we support, the better it will be. Most of us are not prepared to support the international moneylenders' racket. I hope that that is a matter that we shall discuss to-morrow. I want to see the complete abolition of the present monetary system ultimately based on gold, and the sooner we make our currency system relate itself to the productive capacity of the countries concerned the better for everybody. I would like to see it made clear that the British Empire, with its enormous land areas and resources, is prepared to do something for the security of Europe. All of our immense areas of land and our natural resources are, for some man-made reason, now under the undisputed control of the monopolists. Make it clear to all people, whatever their creed, however much they may be our enemies, that these restrictions will be swept aside, that we will do our utmost to bring economic security to all the peoples of Europe, and in that way assure that, in so far as in us lies, peace shall be brought to all the peoples on this earth.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION (MR. DUFF COOPER).—I think the Debate has certainly done no harm and may have served one or two useful purposes, except for the speech of the hon. Member for Westhoughton (Mr. Rhys Davies), rather emphasising our responsibility for the war and minimising those of the enemy, a speech prompted by a very genuine hatred of war, a speech which asked what we are fighting for. Most of us are well aware what we are fighting for, which is a very different thing from our final war aims. Except for that speech, I have heard nothing with which I could quarrel. The speeches have served to show how important the subject is, and also how difficult it is. Whether this was the exact moment to raise it is another question. The two reasons given by the hon. Member for East Wolverhampton were not, I think, convincing.

MR. MANDER. I was asking a question with regard to the statement broadcast in the Press that the Government were holding

a number of meetings at which statements would be made with regard to their war aims, and I asked the right hon Gentleman to explain exactly what that means and what is being said

MR COOPER No such official statement has been issued. The Ministry of Information has been running a campaign explaining the Imperial situation of the British Commonwealth of Nations to the people in the country, to reinforce the knowledge that they already possess of these matters, and one of the statements we have issued says that this Commonwealth of Nations will give the world, after the war, guidance in the right way of facing up to the problems presented by Germany's attempt to dominate the world by force, by a new combination of nations, a new experiment in international co-operation based on consent. This must surely form a guide to any international experiment which may be undertaken after the war. That is all that was meant to be said.

I think the Debate has also demonstrated the extraordinary difficulty of proceeding in any detail towards a definition of war aims. I am certain that the majority of us are pretty plain about what we are fighting for. As the hon Member for East Stirling (Mr Woodburn) said, we did not start this war in order to introduce any new improvements in the world. We struggled against this war. We did not wish to be led into this war. We saw that there was much in the world that needed improvement, but we did not see any problem that needed improving so badly or any improvement in any way that we would like to introduce that would justify the desperate policy of entering into an international war. We stand for a certain way of living. We think that that way of

country. Perhaps the liberty has been limited, but it has been more extended probably than anywhere else in the world. Perhaps the progress has been too slow, but it has at any rate been set and always in the right direction.

When we come down to defining exactly what it is we are going to do after the war, I was challenged by the hon Member for Westhoughton as to exactly what the countries of Europe are going to be. The solution of the Polish question and the Czech frontiers are absolutely matters that no one can deal with in the House of Commons—not while the war is raging. But when we get beyond that general basis of agreement, immediately we find differences of opinion, and in any statement that the Govern-

are still our Allies; and also that will make the widest possible appeal to those men of good will and lovers of freedom who are now the slaves and vassals of our enemies. That is why it is so difficult and delicate a problem.

I admit quite frankly the desirability of issuing a statement as soon as possible, but "as soon as possible" does not mean haste. There should be no undue haste in issuing a statement of this kind. As far as unanimity can be achieved, it will be a good thing, when we are in a position to do so, to make a statement. We are clear why we went to war. We saw the hand of tyranny gradually being extended over Europe, and we saw one free nation after another, one small Power after another, falling a victim to this hideous tyranny. And we have seen their own culture extinguished, we have seen their citizens reduced to slavery. When we saw that that same threat was coming ever nearer to us and that it threatened those upon whose friendship we relied and would eventually threaten the whole world, then only did we take up arms to defend our liberty and the freedom of the world.

MR STOKES: May I correct the right hon. Gentleman? That is what we are fighting against and not fighting for. We are fighting to destroy that. That, I understand, but it is no use fighting for a negative object. You must have a positive one, and the sooner that is stated the better.

MR COOPER: We are fighting for our liberty. When we walk about the streets of London we see how buildings have been destroyed. Some of them may have been beautiful houses and some may have been ugly houses. Equally this world which is now being destroyed by this terrific war, a war which we never desired and which we were prepared to do almost everything to avoid, when this war shall have destroyed a great part of the modern world, it will be our duty then, as it must be our duty now, to think how we can rebuild a more and more beautiful fabric.

16 October, 1940

FREE FRENCHMEN

MR MANDER asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs the countries in which associations of Free Frenchmen under General de Gaulle are being organised to defend liberty and democracy, and whether the British Government is rendering all assistance in its power and approves of such developments?

MR BUTLER: National Committees acting in close co-operation with the Free French Forces have already been established in Brazil, the Argentine, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, the

United States and Egypt, and also in Canada, Australia, South Africa and Mauritius. Representatives of General de Gaulle are engaged in setting up National Committees in a number of other countries. The answer to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative.

5 November, 1940

THE PRIME MINISTER (MR CHURCHILL) Since I last addressed the House on general topics about a month ago, the course of events at home has not been unexpected, nor, on the whole, unsatisfactory. Herr Hitler declared on 4 September that as we would not bend to his will he would wipe out our cities. I

objects in the landscape, and our people are going about their tasks with the utmost activity. Fourteen thousand civilians have been killed and 20 000 seriously wounded, nearly four-fifths of them in London. That has been the loss of life and limb. As against this, scarcely 300 soldiers have been killed and 500 wounded. So much for the attack on military objectives. A great deal of house property has been destroyed or damaged, but nothing that cannot be covered by our insurance scheme. Very little damage has been done to our munitions and aircraft production, though a certain amount of time has been lost through frequent air-raid warnings. This lost time will have to be made up as we get settled down to the new conditions. None of the Services upon which the life of our great cities depend—water, fuel, electricity, gas, sewage—not one, has broken down. On the contrary, although there must inevitably be local shortages, all the authorities concerned with these vital functions of a modern community feel that they are on top of their job and are feeling it increasingly as each week is passed.

Transport has been a greater difficulty, as may well be imagined when we think of the vast numbers who go in and out of our great cities every day. However, we are getting a good grip on that, and I say with some confidence that by one method or another, and probably by many methods at the same time, the problems connected with transport will be solved in a manner tolerable to the great numbers of people who are affected. Shelters are being multiplied and improved, and preparations on an extensive scale are in progress for mitigating the inevitable severities of the winter for those who are using the shelters. All this is going forward, and the House has received accounts of it from the different Ministers who are particularly concerned. In these vicissitudes the bearing of our people, not only in London, but in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and other places, has gained the unstirred admiration of all classes throughout the British Empire, throughout the United States, and, so far as they have been allowed to hear about it, among the peoples of the captive

countries As I was going home the other night, I asked a group of steel-helmeted men who stood about the door what was going on, and a deep voice in the background said, "It's a grand life, if we don't weaken" There is the British watchword for the winter of 1940 We will think of something else by the winter of 1941

There is no doubt that the full malice and power of the enemy and his bombing force have been employed against us They have tried their best to obey Hitler's orders, but the scale of their attack has dwindled. The weekly average of the casualties killed and seriously wounded was, for September, 4,500, and, for October, 3,500 In the first week of intense bombardment in September there were 6,000 casualties, in the last week of October only 2,000 casualties This diminution in the scale of the attack is not entirely due to the weather The weather, no doubt, has a lot to do with it, but there are other things going on which play their part besides the weather and which, I believe, will play a greater part as the months pass by The House will not wish me to go into technical details on these points

Meanwhile, how have the attackers fared? Two months ago I hazarded the statement—I admit it was rather a shot—that we hoped over our own country to destroy three enemy machines to one, and six pilots to one So far it seems I was almost exactly right about the machines taking the whole period, and I was very nearly right about the pilots, but, of course if you count the whole of the crews of the large enemy bombers which have been brought down, all highly trained personnel, then it would be more like ten to one So I somewhat underestimated, from that point of view, the results which have been achieved Obviously, this process, combined with our own rapidly increasing production and the production in the Empire and in the United States of aircraft and airmen, is much the quickest road to our reaching that parity in the air which has always been considered the minimum of our safety, and thereafter reaching that superiority in the air which is the indispensable precursor of victory Surveying the whole scene, alike in its splendour and its devastation, I see no reason to regret that Herr Hitler tried to break the British spirit by the blind bombing of our cities and our countryside.

More serious than the air raids has been the recent recrudescence of U-boat sinkings in the Atlantic approaches to our islands The fact that we cannot use the South and West Coasts of Ireland to refuel our flotillas and aircraft and thus protect the trade by which Ireland as well as Great Britain lives, is a most heavy and grievous burden and one which should never have been placed on our shoulders, broad though they be Moreover, we have been during the last month at the lowest point of our flotilla strength The threat of invasion has always to be met The great forces which we are maintaining in the Mediterranean, in addition to the escorts necessary for the protection of our innumerable convoys, have imposed on the Royal Navy a gigantic task

However, this period of stringency is perhaps a

fifty American destroyers are rapidly coming into service just when they are most needed and the main flow of new construction started at the outbreak of war is now coming on. In spite of serious losses we have still very nearly as much shipping tonnage as we had at the outbreak of the war, and a great deal of neutral tonnage which used to trade freely with us is now under our control. Moreover on

Two more German U days on the Western :

sank the *Empress of Britain*. We have a number of their crews who have been saved as prisoners of war. On the other hand, when I speak of our shipping tonnage not being appreciably diminished from the beginning of the war, it must be remembered that our shipping is not so fruitful in war as in peace time because ships have to go a long way round, they have often to zig zag and there are delays in the marshalling of convoys and sometimes delays through congestion at the ports. Therefore, it would not be wise to suppose that a greater stringency has not been brought about, although the actual volume of shipping remains practically undiminished.

I need scarcely say that intense efforts are being made by the Admiralty—my right hon. Friend the First Lord gives the whole of his life and strength and high abilities to the task, and I am confident that he is aided by the ablest officers in the Service—

and might have become catastrophic, but the dangers to our sea-borne traffic mature much more slowly. They are none the less formidable, however, and, if in any way neglected, they would touch the life of the State. We must expect that next year a still heavier U boat attack will be made upon us and we are making immense preparations to meet it.

We have to look a long way ahead in this sphere of the war. We have to think of the years 1943 and 1944 and of the tonnage programmes which we shall be able to move and which we shall have to move across the oceans then. Every endeavour must be made to use the time available to produce the greatest volume of food of which this fertile island is capable and so liberate our Navy and our merchant shipping for the movement of the considerable armies which will certainly be required in those years, if the enemy do not surrender or collapse in the meanwhile. Having dwelt upon this sea communications aspect rather openly and bluntly this morning, I should not like to leave it without assuring the House that I, personally, have no doubt whatever that we shall make our way through all right.

I turn to another of our dangers. Some of those very clever people who are sometimes wise after the event are now talking

about "the invasion scare" I do not mind that, because it is true that the danger of invasion, particularly invasion by barges, has diminished with the coming of the winter months and the unpredictable uncertainty of the weather. It has also been diminished by the victories of the Royal Air Force and the ever-growing strength of the British Army. When I spoke at the end of June, I set forth in detail the well known difficulties which would attend the invasion of these islands and which had been forgotten in years when we had not considered the matter at all. At that time, we had only a few brigades of well armed and well trained troops in this island. We had no Home Guard to deal with an invader or to deal with air-borne attacks behind the lines and the Royal Air Force had not then proved itself master of our own air by daylight.

Very different is the scene to day. We have a very large Army here, improving in equipment and training continually. The main part of that Army is now highly mobile and is being constantly imbued with the spirit of counter attack. We have 1,700,000 men in the Home Guard, all of whom will be in uniform by the end of this year and nearly all of whom are in uniform at this moment. Nearly 1,000,000 of the Home Guard have rifles or machine guns. Nearly half of the Home Guard are veteran soldiers of the last war. Such a Force is of the highest value and importance. A country where every street and every village bristles with loyal, resolute, armed men is a country against which the kind of tactics which destroyed Dutch resistance—tactics of parachutists or air borne troops in carriers or gliders, Fifth Column activities—if there were any over here, and I am increasingly sceptical—would prove wholly ineffective. A country so defended would not be liable to be overthrown by such tactics. Therefore, I agree with those who think that the invasion danger has for the time being diminished. But do not let us make the mistake of assuming that it has passed away, or that it may not occur in more acute form or in some other form.

What is it that has turned invasion into an invasion scare? It is the maintenance in Britain of strong forces and unremitting vigilance by sea, air and land. A mighty army crouches across

a manœuvre to tie us down here and prevent us redispersing our Forces. The vital realities of their duties must be borne in on the whole of our Home Forces and the whole of our Home Guard during these winter months. There must be no relaxation except for necessary leave, but let me say this: that the plain fact that an invasion, planned on so vast a scale has not been attempted in spite of the very great need of the enemy to destroy us in our citadel and that all these anxious months when we stood alone and the whole world wondered, have passed safely away—that

fact constitutes in itself one of the historic victories of the British Isles and is a monumental milestone on our onward march

Here let me say a word about the British Army. We are engaged in forming and training a very strong Army, and the like is being done in Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and India. We are now in the fifteenth month of the war and the British Army of which I speak particularly now, is beginning to shape itself with precision. Although the sea and air will be the main elements of the war effort of the British Empire, we must have a strong Army, well equipped, well armed, well trained and well organised, capable of intervening as the war proceeds in the liberation of one or other of the many countries which are yearning to throw off the odious Nazi yoke. Without such an Army, forged, tempered and sharpened, and the sea power which gives it so wide a choice, the action of this war might be needlessly prolonged and might drift towards disastrous stalemate. Nothing must be done which retards or hinders the development of our Army. What it lacks in numbers compared with the Nazi or Fascist hosts, it must make up in quality and equipment. This is a lengthy process, but we must persevere and not let ourselves be drawn from the task by passing distractions or temptations.

The British Army is quite ready in any emergency to give all possible help to Civil Defence forces in meeting local difficulties which might arise from exceptional air attack. To some districts which are overweighted by the burdens cast upon them they have given very great assistance and will, where necessary, give more, but to hear some people talk one would think that we must begin almost immediately to draft a large portion of our Army into the civil and A.R.P. Services. One would take its lorries, another would take its engineers and another would take its telegraphists, yet another would use man power on a great scale to clear away ruins. Just before this war it was a temptation not to make proper arrangements for Civil Defence, now there is this inclination, not unnaturally—it appears quite reasonable and rather seductive—to trench unduly on the efficiency of the military

of the highest quality. Only in this way should we reach a position where instead of being forced to suffer the measureless vexations of a widespread defensive attitude—but here now and hit there then often inevitably too late—we shall regain the initiative and make the enemy wonder where and how we are going to strike at them. I ask the House which is the foundation of our war-making effort to keep a careful eye on this aspect of our affairs.

During all this menace of invasion, so near and so deadly, we have never failed to reinforce our Armies in Egypt, almost to the

limits of our shipping capacity, not only with men but with precious weapons which it was a wrench to take from our forces here. Scores of thousands of troops have left this Island month after month or have been drawn from other parts of the Empire for the Middle East. These troops have been streaming away from this Island during the months when some of those who now talk so gaily about the invasion scare were scared stiff themselves. Several times I have told the House that I could not guarantee a favourable result in the Middle East. After all, our position there was calculated on the basis that France was our Ally and that the powerful French Armies that General Weygand organised would stand side by side with us in the discharge of our joint obligations. The submission of the French Government to the German conquest and to the Italian exploitation has not only deprived us of those armies in Syria, Tunis, Algeria and Morocco, but has denied us the assistance of the fine French Navy and the use of the French naval and air bases in the Mediterranean. Such a frightful desertion and loss might well have confronted us with an insoluble problem. The Italian army in Libya, which some months ago far outnumbered the British and Imperial

forces on the frontiers of Egypt and in the Soudan is far less unfavourable than it was at the time of the French collapse. I can certainly not prophesy to the House about battles which have yet to be fought; but I think that on 5th November the British force ever

serious collisions with the Italian forces, but we have every reason to be content with the results of the skirmishes and forays which have taken place on the ground and in the air. Up to the end of September, the Italian official published casualties for the fighting in Libya amounted to 800 killed, 1,700 wounded and 860 missing, our own casualties for the same period and in the same theatre were 66 killed, 68 wounded, and 36 missing—a scale approaching something like 20 to 1. These facts speak for themselves and should be a good omen for the greater battles and engagements which certainly will develop, perhaps in the Winter, certainly in the Spring.

At the same time that the Navy is keeping open the sea routes under this very dangerous U-boat attack, and endeavouring to hunt down merchant raiders in the outer seas, and maintaining a strict blockade—at the same time as it is doing that—we have ceaselessly strengthened the Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean, and we are ready at any time to engage the Italian Navy in a general action. Time after time our Fleet has moved into close proximity to the main concentration of the Italian Fleet and we know that their presence has been detected from the air, but so

far these cruises have not resulted in any decisive encounter. Still, the power of the British Fleet in the Eastern Mediterranean goes a long way to restore the situation created by the collapse of France and is a great guarantee to our friend and Ally, Turkey, of the unweakening power of Great Britain on the seas. Therefore, whether you look at the Home Front or at the Mediterranean theatre, I do not think it can be denied that we are far better off than anyone would have ventured to predict four or five months ago.

But now a new call has suddenly been made upon us. The Italian dictator, perhaps embarrassed by the somewhat flimsy flirtations of M. Laval with the German conqueror, or perhaps playing his part in some new predatory design, has, in his customary cold blooded way, fallen upon the small but famous and immortal Greek nation. Without the slightest provocation, with no pretence at parley, Signor Mussolini has invaded Greece, or tried to do so, and his aircraft have murdered an increasing number of Greek civilians, women and children, in Salonika and many other open Greek towns. The Greek King, his Government and the Greek people have resolved to fight for life and honour, and lest the world should be too easily led in chains. France and Great Britain guaranteed to come to the aid of Greece if she were the victim of unprovoked aggression. It was a joint

At any rate, the Vichy Government is no longer in a position to play its expected part in the task it had accepted. We are, therefore, left alone.

We have most carefully abstained from any action likely to draw upon the Greeks the enmity of the criminal dictators. For their part, the Greeks have maintained so strict a neutrality that we were unacquainted with their dispositions or their intentions. I have already been at some pains to set forth to the House the very serious preoccupations which dominate us both at home and in the Middle East. We face one gigantic army across the waters of the Channel, we face another very powerful army, much more numerous, on the frontier of the Libyan Desert, and I must, as I say, approach the new task with a strong sense of the immense responsibilities which rest upon us both at home and in Egypt, and of the very great and continual dangers by which we are con-

growing scale. I should also say that our forces are in movement with the desire and design to help the Greeks to the utmost of our capacity, having regard to our other obligations. I hope I shall

not be asked by the House to give any definite account of such measures as we are able to take. If I were to set them high, I might raise false hopes; if I set them low, I might cause undue despondency and alarm; and if I stated exactly what they were, that would be exactly what the enemy would like to know. We shall do our best. That is all I can say. To that decision and declaration, generously and faithfully interpreted, I invoke with confidence the approval of the House.

MR. LEES-SMITH (Keighley)

My impression is that

Britain has now passed through its most intense and perilous stage. Hitler has failed to make this into a short war, and in a war of length and cumulative long-distance forces are unquestionably on our side. That seems to be the beginning and the end of the general picture.

A month ago I pointed out that the sinkings were greater than in the worst week of the last war. Since then they have increased, and in the last recorded week they have increased to a higher degree still. It is quite evident that now the sinkings must be at two or three times the rate of three months ago that if

Lough Swilly, the whole

night. These sinkings are taking place on the west coast of Ireland and the world ought to realise what we are paying for our principles. There is no doubt about what Herr Hitler would

A month ago I stated that if we wished to assist those whom Italy was likely to attack—and coming events had cast their shadows a month ago

be continuously to be

out intermission. It

in my view the policy

of sending bombing

times, spread over several weeks, is not air operations but stunts,

and stunts of the most mischievous character, because they give

your enemy warning of what they may expect and give them time

to prepare. When we first went there the anti aircraft defences

of Italy were practically negligible; I do not think there were

any, and I do not know what they are now, but certainly they have

had time, and it is a fact that the anti aircraft defences of France

are at the disposal of Germany and Italy. I know that the answer

be done now, but whether I am right or wrong, even if we were a danger of Graziani beating our reduced Army in F because we had detached from that Army a number of troops send to Greece, still it would be better to send those Success in war depends always on taking risks. You carry on war successfully without taking risks. I think the in this case is a very small one, and even if it be a large one, think it is worth taking. I say more, speaking as a as well as an Englishman, I would sooner save Greece which prepared to fight for itself than save Egypt, which is not to fight for itself. I consider that the whole future prosecution of the war depends more upon our holding the Greek is and the Greek mainland if it can be done, than upon our holding Egypt. I think this is the turning point in the war. If can, as it really appears likely now, give the junior partner . . . the war than we shall do . . . of Egypt and any amount successful defence in a war in which offence was never needed, or more possible.

MR HORE-BELISHA (Devonport): . . . It was a pity thought, that my right hon Friend lacked this morning some his customary full-bloodedness. There are occasions upon which discretion is the lesser part of valour. However, my right Friend had no achievement to record. There is no by His Majesty's Government which has been described to House. There is, however, a great opportunity, perhaps . . . action which has . . . To take it in full . . . To neglect it might . . . to the loss of British influence in Asia and in Africa. My hon Friend saw difficulties in the way of offensive action; it is not we who are invited to help Greece; it is Greece who is helping us. The aid that the Greeks are giving to our flag at the present moment is equivalent to the dispatch by Britain of another expeditionary force. That is the light in which the matter should be viewed.

When Italy first entered the struggle there was great expectation. Ministers spoke disparagingly of the military prowess of the country, and they still do. They never mention the Italian except in terms of contempt. Therefore, it was thought that should be virile. There was a peninsula with 2,500 miles of coastline, with all the principal railways running along the coastline, with the industries concentrated in one region. There was there a land so vulnerable to attack from sea and air that the possessions of Italy were isolated. They were across. Their armies could not be reinforced or supplied. It was hoped that there would be a revolt in Abyssinia, that

Airs who had been so maltreated by Graziani would be encouraged to rise. However, there were reasons—and they have been explained to us—why we could not do what was expected of us. The Army in Egypt had not been reformed to meet the new contingency created by the French defection. The Fleet lacked sheltering harbours, the Air Force had no bases from which to bombard Italy from close range. All that has been rectified. A ceaseless stream of convoys, we have been told, has been proceeding to Egypt. Our Fleet we have also been told, has been reinforced twice over in its effective strength and we have complete control of the Eastern Mediterranean. These are encouraging facts. But the harbours for the Fleet and the aerodromes for our pilots were until a week ago still lacking. They have now been provided. This deficiency has been remedied. We were not invited to invade a hostile country and overcome resistance. Wide arms are open to us. Our Fleet can find anchorages and our bombers can have bases. Nothing will rejoice the British people more than to learn that Italy is being given in unstinted doses some of that medicine which she is ready so callously to dispense to others. Let us bomb Italy and bomb Italy hard. I quite agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Keighley (Mr. Lees Smith) that now we can do it. Well, let us take advantage of the chance.

There are other opportunities before us.

Syria is as important to British security in the Middle East as Ireland is to British security in the Atlantic. What is the situation in Syria? If Syria is held neither Turkey nor Palestine can be attacked on two flanks. What is the situation? The French Army has been disarmed. A part of it, and perhaps a large part of it, is still well affected towards Britain, at any rate it would be if we were paying them their emoluments. These elements may perhaps have been discouraged by the failure of Dakar, but that is a failure which in some part can now be redeemed, although not wholly because the geographical situation is different. In Syria it is the Italians and not the British who are spreading their tentacles. They have a commission in Syria holding up British supplies to Turkey. But Syria does not belong to France, it is mandated territory and the Italians have no right in Syria. Why should it always be left to others to take strong action? We are defending a great cause which may go down if we do not show more resolution.

This morning we read in the newspapers that having apparently deposed the French administrator, the Spanish military commander at Tangiers has proclaimed himself Governor of the port, and has liquidated most of its international institutions presumably with the intention that it may soon be annexed to Spain or become a Spanish protectorate. If the Spaniards can do it, we can surely do a little less. The suggestion I am making is not that we should dispense with international institutions and take over Syria as a British possession, but that we should appear

there as liberators and that we should offer to fulfil the contract which France had with Syria to give the Arabs their independence. If we were to enter Syria in that crusading spirit, we should not only give expression to the purposes for which we entered this war, but we should gain a great strategical advantage for ourselves and also confer a strategical advantage of infinite importance upon Turkey. Our diplomacy has failed to bring Turkey in. Our diplomacy has not had one single success since the war began. It is a dismal chronicle, but here with strong action could we not persuade Turkey to stand in greater safety by our side? There are reasons for haste. There is not only the reason I have given that we would perhaps bring Turkey into a more encouraging frame of mind, but there is the Pétain-Hitler agreement, which my right hon. Friend never mentioned this afternoon. Let us act before the agreement is implemented.

There must be greater realism not only in dealing with individuals but in dealing with situations.

Up to the last moment we thought that by persuasion we might convert Rumania to our side. How else can you explain leaving a British fleet of tankers on the Danube for Germany to use? How else can you explain leaving the oil wells intact which will give Germany 6,250,000 tons a year as long as she keeps that country? How many pilots will we require to bomb the oil tanks and refineries before you can account for 6,250,000 tons? Is there realism in dealing with Japan? Is it true that the Government are going to allow British companies to sell oil to Japan when the Prime Minister has said with great clarity that the victory of Japan would mean the extermination of British interests in the Far East? Why should we be conciliatory towards Spain? Why should we relax our blockade to please Spain? I hope that in the case of Greece we are going to seize this great opportunity. I am doubtful, though I hope I am misguided, because my right hon. Friend is now beginning to speak of 1943 and 1944. Previously it was 1941 and 1942. That is an ominous use of the calendar. With every victory of the Axis they acquire more territory and they add to the resources which they can develop. They have all the shipyards, all the aircraft factories and all the iron ore in Europe. They have most of their requirements. What use can they make of them in the next three years? You cannot win a total war without a total effort.

You cannot beat Germany, which has a fully employed population, and in addition a million prisoners whom she is using and above that a million captives from the occupied territories with such an effort as we are making. It is not only the reputation of my right hon. Friend, it is the survival of this country which depends on the realisation of these facts. You have virtually more unemployed to-day than when the war broke out. Is that realised? We cannot regard that situation with complacency.

When the war broke out we had a million. Since then we have called up the best part of 2,000,000 people, and we still have 600,000 unemployed. Last January my right hon. Friend called upon a million women to come boldly forward. We are now in November, and there are 227,293 women unemployed. Is that a total effort? You have over 8,000 unemployed in shipbuilding, over 15,000 in engineering, and 12,000 in agriculture, on which we depend for our sustenance. In chemicals, in bricks, in building, in almost every industry you have unemployment. At any rate, you are not using the country to its full capacity. We have perhaps 45,000 men in training to make and set machine tools. In Germany they have 23,700 instructors. They have more than
 . . . y have
 . . . many
 . . . have
 . . . effort

must be made against powers so unscrupulous, so formidable, and so industrious . . .

Is it becoming the practice of Ministers to make their important announcements on the wireless? That is bad enough, but when they do not even make them on the wireless which addresses the people at home, but make them on the Overseas wireless at three o'clock in the morning, that is a course of action to which exception might be taken. It is not fair to the House of Commons to whom all these Ministers owe their careers. We are all the children of Parliament. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has upheld Parliament more than any other man. His writings and speeches are full of tributes to it and of recognition of it for the part it has played in moulding his own life. Only last Sunday I was reading an article which was reprinted in a newspaper, and which he had written on my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for War. In that article, which he wrote before he became Prime Minister, he complained that the House of Commons

* had declined in liveliness and debating power. The bulk of its Members became functionaries to register the will or lack of will of party leaders."

What an irony it would be and what a paradox if, under my right hon. Friend's regis, Parliament, to which he and the nation owe so much, were to fall into useless inaction or, as he might phrase it himself, into "innocuous desuetude." It is enough to call my right hon. Friend's attention to this, for he is a great man and a great democrat, a man whom I, like most of us, have always admired. Let him use his opportunity for preserving the democracy for which we are fighting. It is only from the people, being through their representatives in Parliament and through a free Press, that the Government can be stimulated and, if necessary, criticised, and that the purpose which we entered this war to vindicate can be justified in the eyes of the world . . .

whose views are somewhat orthodox, who are now convinced that we cannot get back to the old world. They are convinced that the future has to be different and much better. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us the blue prints of it and to give us something tangible. If he does so, he will have a response which will astonish him. I believe that behind the offensive, and the military strategy of which the right hon. Gentleman has talked, we must have a deeper and wider social purpose. You must give the people of Europe some idea of the sort of Europe to which we are wading and fighting, and if necessary for which we are bleeding. If you give them the vision, I am sure you will get the response.

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